

9th February 1924]

4.—So far as information is available, the number of cattle slaughtered during the quinquennium ending with 1921-22 was as shown below :—

	Bulls.	Cows.	Calves.
Municipal areas ...	78,131	143,313	11,429
Local Board areas ... (No information.)		90,637	13,509
Total ...	78,131	233,950	24,938

These figures must be regarded as approximate only. No information is available as to the precise purpose for which the cattle were slaughtered.

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI :—“ With reference to the staggering figures 78,000, 233,000, 24,000, etc., of cattle slaughtered in 1921-22, may I ask the hon. the Minister for Development whether he proposes to see that the law is altered, if necessary, with regard to permitting municipalities and local boards to prohibit slaughter of useful cattle in their areas ? ”

The hon. Diwan Bahadur T. N. SIVAGNAM PILLAI :—“ It is a very difficult matter, Sir, and I require notice of the question.”

MOTIONS ON MATTERS OF GENERAL PUBLIC INTEREST.

STOPPING THE FURTHER AMALGAMATION OF VILLAGES.

Diwan Bahadur P. KESAVA PILLAI :—“ Sir, I have waited and hoped and I have been given this opportunity of moving this Resolution for which I thank the House and for which at least the non-official side of it should be grateful to you, Sir, and to His Excellency. I gave notice of a Resolution in two parts, of which one was this :

‘ That this Council recommends to the Government that further grouping of villages may be forthwith stopped.’

“ The other Resolution was :

‘ That this Council recommends to the Government that in the interests of the convenience of the people and of the efficiency of the service, the grouping of villages already carried out may be modified so as to increase the number of village officers and menials with a special care to preserve their hereditary rights.’

“ But the ballot box has only given me one part of it, that is, the first portion, and I have much pleasure in moving it.

“ It is not a party question. You, Sir, will see that a number of hon. Members of this House belonging to all parties have given notice of motions more or less of a similar nature agreeing with me, and at the same time adding something more. So, there will be no difficulty at all for me in getting this Resolution passed by this House. The only difficulty will be on the side of the Government. They will say : ‘ We have no money ; these are hard times ; we had better cut down a certain number of hands so that the other people might be given more pay’. Sir, the non-official Members of this House are more or less responsible for agitating for increase of pay to the village officers and menials. So long ago as the 4th of February 1912 I moved a Resolution in this House for increased pay to the village

[Mr. P. Kesava Pillai]

[9th February 1924]

karnams. The Government did not at that time want to give them increase of pay. The hon. Sir John Atkinson who was then in charge of the department said that the karnams were getting perquisites and so they should be content with the pay they had. Again, Sir, in the year 1914 another Resolution was moved by my hon. Friend Mr. Krishna Rao for travelling allowance to village officers, and I seconded that Resolution. There was a good deal of discussion then, but nothing was done. Again, on the 2nd February 1915, there was a Resolution for the revision of the pay of the village servants. The Government, in consideration of all these Resolutions and agitations of the village officers, were obliged to give them more pay, but, at the same time, they could not easily find ways and means to pay it. So, they wanted to reduce the number of village officers and the menials in the village service, and make up the amount required to pay them Rs. 15 and Rs. 8 per month respectively. In reply to a question of mine No. 418, the Government have furnished me with a table showing the village munsifs, karnams and vettis removed from the village establishment. A perusal of that statement will show that the reduction after all has not resulted in any very large amount of saving, but it has created a large amount of discontent, and at the same time caused a good deal of trouble and inconvenience to the village people. I do not know when the pay of the village servants was originally fixed, but from that time if we calculate, we will find that the revenue has been going up by leaps and bounds on account of the settlements and re-settlements, and the work also, especially of the karnams, has been very much increased. In consideration of the increased cost of living, the other services (the superior as well as the subordinate) have been given increased salaries and allowances, but these people were not given. That was the argument we urged why the village officers and menials should be given a more reasonable pay. Unfortunately, the Government get nervous and concerned whenever we ask for increase of pay for these loyal and useful servants. They say 'we have no money, and so we will remove a certain number of people and retain only a certain number of other people and pay them more.' But I am sorry to say that if only the hon. Members of this House, or even if the village officers themselves, had known that such a policy of reducing the number of village officers and servants would be pursued by making these grouping of villages, I do not think we or they would have agitated for any increase of pay. We were not aware of it. This Council is not a party to this grouping policy. This grouping policy has produced many evils in the mufassal and I wonder if the Government Members are not aware of them. I should be sorry if they are ignorant of the evils that have arisen out of this grouping policy. Not only has it caused annoyance and inconvenience to the people, but it has resulted also in any number of serious consequences. I am afraid there has been a good deal of corruption. No doubt exceptions there have been, but it is rather a notorious affair that the village officers, and even their menials, are scrambling for these appointments, staking their all."

The hon. Sir CHARLES TODHUNTER :—"Why?"

Diwan Bahadur P. KESAVA PILLAI :—"Why, because they have been enjoying the privileges of these village offices for a century and a half; or even two centuries in some of the families. When they are deprived of these, they feel very much wronged, and so, in order not to lose these

9th February 1924]

[Mr. P. Kesava Pillai]

appointments which have been in their families for such a long time—I know for instance these appointments have been continued in some families even from the time of the Nawabs of the Carnatic—the descendants of such families feel distressed that they in their time should lose them. So, they would go to the length of paying anything to the men who are likely to help them in order to enable them to keep these appointments in their families. The Act provides that the bribe-taker and the bribe-giver will both be punished, and so they will not come forward to give information. With all that, it is well known that even in high quarters—I am very sorry to say that, but there are exceptions always—there are too many temptations held out in order to see that recommendations are taken and pressures are brought forward upon officers. In the village itself there is such a scramble that people run into debts in order to pay one man or the other. All these things have been going on in the mufassal since the grouping policy has been introduced. As I have already pointed out, we are not responsible for the grouping policy. It is the Government that has been responsible for it. It is the Board, which is a part of the Government, that has been responsible for it. And then, no doubt we are asking for more pay, but without giving something out of what you have been taking from the lands in ever increasing amounts, you want to cut down the number. Sir, we know we are always talking of the iniquitous impost of 348 lakhs which the Government of India is taking away from us. We are fighting to get it reduced, and our valiant Leader of the House has been fighting for it; and when they get it reduced, they ought to pay, that is, a big morsel out of it, to the village service. We are paying 348 lakhs, whereas Lord Meston said that we ought to pay only 167 lakhs. Somehow or other we have to pay it to the Government of India, but we do not pay well our village servants who are directly responsible for collecting that money and for keeping peace and order in the villages. You do not spend sufficiently out of it on our irrigation works. You stinted in your own expenditure and allowed it to be squandered by the Government of India. No other province is paying such a large amount as the Madras province, and why because you pay your servants so low that they thought that they could put their hands into your pocket and take as much as possible. I blame the Government for it.

“I do not want to stand in the way of so many hon. Members in this House who are anxious to say a word or two on this important subject. To save these poor village officers from trouble and shame, especially those who have held these offices hereditarily for a very long time, and also to save your own officers—I mean many of them—from temptations, I would beg of you to put a stop to this policy. It is very necessary in the interest of morality and in the interest of public peace. You cannot ignore the discontent in the village side. It is more or less widespread and has reached all over the Presidency, and you cannot say we do not mind these village people. All of them are people who have something at stake in this land. The Government are losing the services of very many influential people. There are a large number of them who should not be allowed to nurse discontent. It is neither a good policy nor a just course to persist in.

“The other day, when the Viceroy came, it was the village officers who were asked to guard the railway line all over. The *talaiyaris* were asked to go and guard the line at the rate of one man

11-30 a.m.

[Mr. P. Kesava Pillai]

[9th February 1924]

for every four miles. It was because all your police cannot do it. And when the talaiyaris were sent up, the villages had to suffer. However, that was done.

"There was one suggestion made to me yesterday by two representatives of the Village Officers' Association to meet the financial difficulties with regard to paying these village officers. That was to stop jamabandi travelling allowances. It is stated that the *karnams* and *reddis* are to be paid Rs. 15 and Rs. 10, respectively, to attend the *jamabandi* and to answer the calls of the Revenue officers. But they do not get the money. As a matter of fact, this Rs. 15 or Rs. 10 gets into some other hands on the way."

Mr. R. SRINIVASA AYYANGAR :—"It is not Rs. 15 and Rs. 10, but Rs. 10 and Rs. 5."

Diwan Bahadur P. KESAVA PILLAI :—"I beg your pardon; I stand corrected. This money never reaches them. A large amount can be scraped together by stopping this allowance. For God's sake, therefore, do not reduce their number. If the Government would give satisfaction to the village officers who have been loyal to them from father to son, it is much better that the hon. the Finance Member finds some other means of paying them, than by reducing the number of village officers and menials. If he liked, he could cut down the allowances given to the higher officers and pay these poor people. That is a difficult task I know."

The hon. Sir CHARLES TODD HUNTER :—"May I ask the hon. Member whether he has any idea how the allowances paid to the higher officers compare with the increase of pay given to the village officers? They ask for Rs. 1½ crores, while the allowances paid to the higher officers would come to about Rs. 1½ lakhs."

Diwan Bahadur P. KESAVA PILLAI :—"I was speaking not of the higher officers only. I mean all the officers. I hope they will not claim higher pay. Now they have claimed higher pay before the Lee Commission. But these village people have not the means to come and tell you how miserable they are when deprived of their hereditary offices, and what difficulty they feel on their low pay. You know, Sir, their difficulties in making supplies to the officers. These people are content provided they are given their posts on the hereditary basis. They are even willing to forego their pay provided you do not pursue a policy which has not the sanction of this House, the policy of grouping the villages and depriving the villages of the facilities they had had all along."

"What about the poor *vettis* and *talaiyaris* who are sent away in such large numbers? The policemen cannot guard the villages. The *talaiyari* was the village policeman, and if there are only two men where there were six or seven, they can hardly do their work satisfactorily. The village *karnam* and the village *reddi* are unable to look over a larger area with a less number of *vettis* and *talaiyaris*. Where there were eight or nine, you have reduced the number to two or three for paying Rs. 8 to each instead of Rs. 4. I would beg of you to take this matter into your serious consideration from a political point of view also. This is a matter of grave importance, and to cut down the number of village officers by such a large number and to deprive the villages of their facilities will lead to difficulty."

"With these few words, I move my Resolution."

9th February 1924]

Rao Bahadur C. NATESA MUDALIYAR :—“I second the Resolution, Sir. I have myself given notice of a similar motion.

“From time immemorial each of our villages has been a self-governing and self-contained unit with a village headman as the hereditary head. He was not there for any pecuniary advantage but for social prestige. Now, to deprive him of that position means not only insulting him but also putting the whole family to which he belongs to indignity—a family which has earned the hereditary right to supply one of its members as village headman. This grouping destroys the village individuality; and the village ceases to be a unit.

“Now, there is meaning in it and it is quite logical when an hon. Member asked yesterday whether there are villages without village munsifs. While the hon. the Revenue Member is attempting to deprive the villagers of this proud privilege, how can the hon. the Law Member expect the villagers to do *kudimaramath* work? Sir, I am not only for dropping this regrouping immediately, but I am also for separating the regrouped villages into their original units and restoring the various village officers. The mistake lies in thinking that the village headman is a mere revenue subordinate. He is not only that, but he is the social head of the village too.”

Mr. B. MUNISWAMI NAYUDU :—“I beg to move an amendment to the Resolution, viz. :—

After the word ‘villages’ in line 2 insert the words ‘both in ryotwari and zamindari areas’, and

add at the end the following :—

‘and that proposals, if any, for abolishing or not paying emoluments to any of the village officers in zamindari villages be dropped.’

“My first amendment is to give effect to the object of the Resolution moved by my hon. Friend Mr. Kesava Pillai in regard to the grouping of villages not only in ryotwari villages but also in zamindari villages.

“In moving my second amendment, I have in view the recommendation made by the Retrenchment Committee, that about Rs. 6 lakhs might be saved if only the office of the village headman is done away with in zamindari villages. I refer to page 203 of the Report of the Retrenchment Committee, Volume I, where it is stated :

‘According to the principles and in the scheme of permanent settlement there was no place for a village headman in permanently-settled estates.’

Then at page 204 you find the provision under the head ‘Proprietary Estates Village Service’ in the Budget at present, i.e.,—

								RS.
6,521 headmen	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	6,44,936
180 monigars	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2,284

so that it is proposed to save Rs. 6 lakhs and odd by doing away with the headmen and the *monigars*. While retaining the other village officers as the *karnams* and the *talaiyaris*, it is proposed to do away with only the village headmen. I really do not see how the village headman is not necessary for a zamindari village while he is necessary for a village in Government area. It is said that the proprietor or the zamindar is responsible for maintaining the village headman and not the Government. As to that, I may point out that these village officers in proprietary estates were at first holding and enjoying

[Mr. B. Muniswami Nayudu]

[9th February 1924]

certain emoluments and *inams* as remuneration for their service. In 1894, the Government by Act II of 1894 took away from the proprietors the power to control, appoint and punish these village servants. The proprietors were relegated to the position of mere recommendatory agencies when vacancies occurred in the posts of headmen, and they had to make their recommendation within three months. Otherwise their right would be lost and the Revenue Divisional Officer would make the appointment. It is also expressly enacted that all those *inams* should be enfranchised, and quit-rent levied and that the Government should constitute a separate fund for paying the village servants. It is also clearly indicated that after the Proprietary Estates Village Service Act came into force, from that day onwards, the village officers were prohibited from taking their usual *mamool* or emoluments, so that as between the zamindars and the village officers, the obligation of the zamindars towards the village officers had been taken away by Act II of 1894, and the liability for the same had been assumed by the Government. Is it now open to the Government to say that they will not maintain these village officers?

"I gave notice of a Resolution in this House that the pay of the village officers in zamindari areas also should be enhanced, after the pay of the village servants in ryotwari areas had been increased by a Resolution of this House. But the Government, while raising their pay, issued a Government Order giving only about half the pay given to the village headmen in ryotwari tracts, that is, they increased it from Rs. 4 or 5 to Rs. 8, and in the case of *talaiyaris* from Rs. 4 to 6. Even these small mercies, the Retrenchment Committee is seeking to take away. I submit, Sir, that it would be dangerous to do so after first having deprived the *monigars* and the other headmen of their *inams* and that it would be unjust to say that you will not pay them although the Government is unable to restore them their old *inams* because the pattas are no longer in their names. So, it is not open to the Government now to say that they will not continue to pay them after assuming the responsibilities under the provisions of the Proprietary Estates Village Service Act. I submit that, while the House is anxious to secure the rights of the headmen in ryotwari areas, they should say the same with respect to their colleagues in the proprietary areas, and see that while the village headmen are considered absolutely necessary in the ryotwari areas, they are also absolutely necessary for zamindari areas.

"I hope this House will agree that the proposal for abolishing the emoluments of village headmen in zamindari areas is not given effect to.

"With regard to the original proposition, I submit, Sir, that ever since the grouping began, though no doubt under the statutory authority of the Board of Revenue, there has been any amount of discontent among the village officers. When we were asked large amounts for the purpose of providing money for these village officers, we passed the taxation Bills; but now the Government say that they will cut down the number of officers because they have raised their pay from Rs. 8 to Rs. 15. The result is that the Government save all that they get by the taxation Bills. At this stage, I may point out that, even before the Reforms, the increases of pay were given effect to so far as the *karnams* and *talaiyaris* in Government villages were concerned. The pay of the *karnam* was raised from Rs. 8 to Rs. 15 and that of the *talaiyari* from Rs. 4 to Rs. 8. It is only the pay of the village headmen

9th February 1924] [Mr. B. Muniswami Nayudu]

that was not raised, and after the Reforms this House resolved that it should be raised to Rs. 15 and that Resolution was given effect to. At the same time also the pay of the village officers in the proprietary estates was raised.

11-45 a.m. "The total cost of this was Rs. 34 lakhs. When the Court Fees (Amendment) Act and the Stamp (Amendment) Act were introduced, after the first reading and after the Select Committee stage were passed it was suggested to this House by my hon. Friend from Guntur, Mr. Venkatasubba Rao, that an amendment to the Court Fees (Amendment) Bill by inserting the word 'temporary' before the word 'Amendment' should be made with the object of making the Amendment Bill a temporary measure because it was then said that there was a deficit and that the Amending Bill was introduced for the purpose of meeting it. Since it was required only for meeting a contingency, the hon. Member, Mr. Venkatasubba Rao, urged that this should only be temporary. I then rose and appealed to the House that if the hon. the Revenue Member (then Mr. Habib-ul-lah Sahib) would only give an assurance that he would give effect to the increase of salaries which was then being advocated by the Council and he would give effect to the raising of the salaries of the village headmen which cost about Rs. 34,000, then we would have no objection to make the Amending Bill a permanent measure. I would invite the attention of this hon. House to the proceedings in that connexion reported at page 2748 of the Council Proceedings, Volume VI. After moving for the insertion of the word 'temporary' before the word 'Amendment', and after various speakers had spoken, I got up and said (page 2756):

'Sir, on principle I am in sympathy with the amendment. The only thing that can influence me to oppose it is a promise by the Government that the pay of the village officers will be enhanced. If the Government are prepared to promise that, I should think that this Council will be prepared to oppose the amendment. If the pay of the village officers is enhanced, it will mean a recurring expenditure of 34 lakhs to the Government and it will be proper that by this Bill at any rate the enhanced pay that will have to be paid by the Government shall be secured.'

"That is what I said on that occasion. The hon. the Revenue Member then rose up and said:

'If I intervene at all at this stage, which indeed I had not the least intention to do, I do so merely because the hon. Member from Chittoor, my Friend, Mr. Muniswami Nayudu, has expressed his opinion that he would not oppose this amendment on a contingent condition, viz., if the Government were willing to allot the necessary money for the grant of increased salary to the village officials, in which case he said he would give his support whole-heartedly to this and the following measure.'

The 'following measure' was the Stamp Act (Amendment) Bill. And then he passed on to state:

'But, however, Sir, I, to whom a personal appeal has been made by my hon. Friend, Mr. Muniswami Nayudu, will be quite willing to bring forward a supplementary demand before this House for such amount as may be considered necessary to pay these village officers the extra sum, if, Sir, with your permission, I could lay it before the House and if the House would unanimously vote in favour of that amount.'

I submit, Sir, that, having regard to these proceedings of the House, there was definitely an assurance given to the Council that this recurring expenditure of an excess of 34 lakhs would be, if sanctioned by the Council, incurred by the Government to pay these officers. Having thus taken a vote to obtain very much more than these 34 lakhs, if the Government now say that they are going to cut down expenditure in this direction, I will only say that they have no right to do anything of the sort.

[Mr. B. Muniswami Nayudu] [9th February 1924]

"As I suggested, if the Retrenchment Committee recommends this saving even on the ground of economy, I would say that, if it is, as contended, absolutely necessary to have a certain amount of European element for the good Government of the country, this village establishment is a more necessary one. This is a minimum requirement and any Government should keep up the minimum unit that is essential, as otherwise any amount of disorder and chaos would be produced and the old traditions of the village establishments are likely to be shattered. I need not refer to the heartburning of the officers—I mean of the village officers who are now being removed—and the never-ending factions that are inevitable and which would naturally take some ten years more to subside. I, therefore, strongly urge that orders issued in this respect should not be given effect to."

"It may be asked 'is it good to give effect to these recommendations, because, if the motion is carried, a large amount of additional expenditure must have to be incurred?' In answer I shall only refer to the answer given to an interpellation by the hon. Member, Mr. Kesava Pillai. At page 16 of the list of questions and answers, dated 8th February 1924, we find an appendix No. II, and the total number of officers on duty on 1st April 1920 and the number of officers ordered to be reduced up to 23rd September 1923 are found there. There, Sir, we find that there were 14,271 karnams and 1,125 assistant karnams on the 1st April 1920. In the next column we find that the number has been reduced by 1,693. Omitting the assistant karnams, the total number of karnams reduced is only 500 while, so far as the village headmen are concerned, the reduction will be seen to be four times as large as the karnams. Is there any justification for four times of the number of headmen to go? This regrouping indeed causes a great hardship to many men. There is the question of the village monigar and the rest. I submit that in this Resolution we want that this regrouping should not be given effect to. If the village officers are restored, the additional cost would be only 8 lakhs of rupees, and not 18 lakhs. I only bring this to the notice of the House so that hon. Members may not be led away by thinking that there is a very large saving and that it should not be foregone by the restoration to service of men removed. The cost of the headmen will come to about 1 lakh of rupees, the cost of the karnams about 3.8 lakhs, and that of the *talaiyaris* about 4.2 lakhs so that the total comes to about 8 lakhs. If the suggestion of my hon. Friend, Mr. Kesava Pillai, that the *jamabandi* allowance may be given up, is accepted, then the net cost will only be 6 lakhs of rupees extra. I ask, Sir, whether, in order to save an expenditure of 6 lakhs of rupees, it is necessary that such a huge retrenchment in the staff should be made incidentally causing heart-burning to so many people. I move this amendment to the Resolution and hope that the House will see its way to give its support to it."

Rao Bahadur K. KRISHNASWAMI NAYUDU:—"I second it."

The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"Before proceeding further, I should like to know whether there was reference in the hon. Mr. Muniswami Nayudu's speech to the retrenchment already effected."

Mr. B. MUNISWAMI NAYUDU:—"That was also a part of my argument though it may not be quite relevant on the original motion."

The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"I am much obliged to the hon. Member. In the first place the question now is whether the House should proceed to

9th February 1924]

[The President]

consider the amendment by itself and vote upon it, or whether the hon. the Mover of this motion will accept the amendment and allow the motion as amended to be proceeded with."

Diwan Bahadur P. KESAVA PILLAI:—"So far as I can judge the scope of the amendment, I am afraid the second part of it is rather inappropriate. I would accept the first part of it, and with regard to the second part I suggest that the hon. Member, Mr. Muniswami Nayudu, may bring a separate Resolution if he pleases and not tag it here."

Mr. C. V. VENKATARAMANA AYYANGAR:—"May I know, Sir, if you are dealing with it as a point of order?"

The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"It is very difficult, while discussing the amendment, to omit all discussions on 'the proposals, if any, for abolishing or not paying emoluments to any of the village officers in zamindari villages be dropped'."

Mr. B. MUNISWAMI NAYUDU:—"Sir, the amendment refers only to the Retrenchment Committee Report. I moved it simply because this is a proposal which is embodied in the Report—viz., that the village headmen need not be paid in proprietary estates."

The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"It is not therefore the grouping of villages that is referred to in the amendment. I think the subject of the amendment is distinct from that of the motion and cannot be tacked on to it. I should like to hear the hon. Member explain it to me, but at first sight I do think it cannot be tacked on to the motion."

Mr. B. MUNISWAMI NAYUDU:—"Sir, it would be relevant in this way. While the motion of my hon. Friend, Mr. Kesava Pillai, contemplates two villages being put together, my amendment contemplates two offices being taken away to be replaced by one. However, I have no objection if you put the second part as a separate motion."

The hon. Mr. C. P. RAMASWAMI AYYAR:—"I am very sorry, Mr. President, that I did not quite catch the point."

The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"The point is whether an amendment that proposals for abolishing or not paying emoluments be dropped is admissible under the Standing Orders as an amendment to the proposition that this Council recommends to the Government that the further grouping of villages may be forthwith dropped. My point was that, as I understood Mr. Muniswami Nayudu, this clause dealing with proposals for abolishing or not paying emoluments would not be a question of grouping although he contends that it is a sort of regrouping because it reduces the number of village officers. If my construction is right, I should not admit the amendment."

The hon. Mr. C. P. RAMASWAMI AYYAR:—"If the words 'both in ryotwari and zamindari areas' are included in the Resolution of Mr. Kesava Pillai, to that extent it would be a relevant and pertinent amendment. If the second is added, it is relevant only to a hypothetical case in respect of a part of the matter. It has really no reference to the motion as it has been moved by the hon. Member for Anantapur and I submit, Mr. President, that it will not be really in order."

The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"Standing Order 56 says: 'An amendment must be relevant to, and within the scope of, the subject matter of the

[The President]

[9th February 1924]

clause or motion to which it relates.' I have no doubt at all that the amendment does not fall within the scope of the subject matter of the motion to which it relates, viz., the grouping of villages. The recommendation of the Retrenchment Committee is a matter outside the grouping of villages as understood by all hon. Members who have given notices of the motion. Therefore that amendment is out of order.

"Perhaps we may dispose of the question of the remaining amendments so that the hon. Members who have given notices may not be under a wrong impression. The Standing Order from which I have been just quoting says in the 6th clause :

'In respect of any Motion or any Bill under consideration, the President may select the new clauses or amendments to be proposed, and may, if he thinks fit, call upon any Member who has given notice of an amendment to give such explanation of the object of the amendment as may enable him to form a judgment on it.'

"We have now transformed the original proposition before the House into an amended proposition embodying an amendment accepted by the hon. Mover of the original proposition. I will now call upon Mr. Ramaswami Mudaliyar to justify the insertion as a second step of his amendment."

Mr. A. RAMASWAMI MUDALIYAR :—"I submit my amendment is relevant to the motion even as amended. The Resolution is that this Council recommends to the Government that grouping of villages may be forthwith stopped. The insertion of the words 'both in ryotwari and zamindari areas' by Mr. Muniswami Nayudu does not really go beyond the limits of my Resolution. I add 'and the villages amalgamated during the last two years be divided . . . etc.' We are dealing with one fact, viz., the question of amalgamation of villages either in the past or future."

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—"We are dealing with the further grouping of villages."

Mr. A. RAMASWAMI MUDALIYAR :—"In the next page on the agenda hon. Members will find another Resolution tabled in the name of Mr. Ellappa Chettiyar covering the whole question. There is no question of divisibility."

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—"I have a doubt as to including this amendment as it does not seem to be within the scope of the motion. The hon. Member for Chingleput may continue."

Mr. A. RAMASWAMI MUDALIYAR :—"The amendment is not inconsistent if the purpose of the Resolution will be in order. The fact that the further grouping of villages should be stopped is not inconsistent with the past. The hon. Member is concerned with his own district where grouping has not yet taken place. It is unfortunate that this Resolution should come up first in balloting. Therefore to bring it in order, I have given notice of this amendment. The whole thing has to be taken together and discussed."

Mr. P. SIVA RAO :—"May I say one word with reference to this amendment? The first Resolution lays down a question of principle as to the desirability of amalgamating villages. The second one sought to be moved by Mr. Ramaswami Mudaliyar is only consequential if that principle has to be reversed. Otherwise this amendment cannot be discussed. It will lead to numerous complications. One mutilated portion will come up leaving the principle undiscussed. If the principle underlying the motion of Mr. Kesava Pillai is allowed, it follows that the policy hitherto followed has also to be reversed."

9th February 1924]

The hon. Mr. C. P. RAMASWAMI AYYAR :—“ May I, Sir, in view of the desire of many hon. Members of this House to have this matter discussed, suggest a way out which I think may satisfy all the parties? I am throwing it out as a tentative suggestion. It is possible to modify an amendment by leaving out certain words and inserting other words. There is a logical fallacy involved in the amendment as now moved, viz., that further grouping is what is dealt with in the proposition originally put forward and the motion of the hon. Member for Chingleput will not strictly pertain to that. If therefore the leave of the House is obtained for removing the word ‘ further ’ by an amendment, then the difficulty will be met. That is a change which has to be effected with the leave of the House.”

Diwan Bahadur M. KRISHNAN NAYAR :—“ The hon. the Law Member suggests that the omission of the word ‘ further ’ will remove all difficulties. I think not. For the Resolution suggests that regrouping of villages should be forthwith stopped. That can necessarily apply only to the future, whereas the object of many of us is to consider the subject of grouping villages. Our object is to stop further grouping as well as cancel the grouping that has already taken place. If you omit the word ‘ further ’, I am afraid as it stands it will apply only to the future and not to the past. The ultimate result of permitting the proposal is that it would preclude us from considering the past. It will be a great hardship to us. The solution that we find must satisfy the past as well as the future.”

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—“ I think the hon. the Law Member has suggested a way out of the difficulty. If some one will draft an amendment, we can have a basis for discussion.”

The hon. Mr. C. P. RAMASWAMI AYYAR :—“ All that I say is to have the motion in this form : ‘ That this Council recommends to the Government that the grouping of villages both in ryotwari and zamindari areas may be forthwith stopped.’ Mr. Ramaswami Mudaliyar can move his amendment to this.”

Mr. C. V. VENKATARAMANA AYYANGAR :—“ If the hon. Member’s suggestion is taken up and if our amendments are allowed, we need not be fighting about words.”

The hon. Mr. C. P. RAMASWAMI AYYAR :—“ We have to get an amendment relative to the subject matter. No doubt it is said that the system of administration has been defective in the past and must be improved in the future. But it will be two different things. Therefore, what I suggest is from the language point of view there ought to be no difficulty so long as the words make it clear that it is not only with regard to the future but also to the past. So I suggest this form : ‘ This Council recommends to the Government that the grouping of villages may be reconsidered and that the villages amalgamated, etc.’”

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—“ If the hon. Member Mr. Ramaswami Mudaliyar accepts the suggestion, he can send an amended draft.”

Mr. C. V. VENKATARAMANA AYYANGAR :—“ That will put an end to the discussion about future grouping because the hon. Member said only ‘ reconsidered ’. I want both the future and the past should be stopped.”

The hon. Mr. C. P. RAMASWAMI AYYAR :—“ I have only made a suggestion. It is open to the hon. Members to move the necessary amendments.”

[9th February 1924]

Mr. A. RAMASWAMI MUDALIYAR :—“ I beg leave to move, Sir, that the words after ‘ Government that ’ in the amended motion be omitted and the following words be inserted :—

‘ the policy of grouping villages be discontinued both in ryotwari and zamindari areas and that the villages amalgamated during the last two years be divided into their original units and the village officers who were removed consequent on such amalgamation be restored to their offices ’.”

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—“ Does the hon. Mover of the Resolution accept the amendment ? ”

While the hon. Member Diwan Bahadur P. Kesava Pillai was engaged in going through the amendment which had been handed over to him.

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI said :—“ May I suggest, Sir, that we go on with the next Resolution now and take up this Resolution after lunch so that my hon. Friends can go on with their negotiations in the meanwhile ? ”

The hon. Sir CHARLES TODHUNTER :—“ May I know, Sir, whether the hon. Member representing the University is proposing that we pass to the business next in order under Standing Order 34 ? ”

Diwan Bahadur P. KESAVA PILLAI :—“ I am quite willing to accept the amendment.”

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI :—“ No, Sir. I was moving that this Resolution might be allowed to stand over till lunch.” (laughter).

Diwan Bahadur M. KRISHNAN NAYAR :—“ May I request the hon. Member, Mr. Ramaswami Mudaliyar, to add the words ‘ and menials ’ after the words ‘ village officers ’ ? ”

Mr. R. SRINIVASA AYYANGAR :—“ The term ‘ village menials ’ is unnecessary.”

Mr. A. RAMASWAMI MUDALIYAR :—“ If I am permitted to speak on my amendment first, any hon. Member who wants me to make any further amendment may speak afterwards and I shall consider the suggestions thus made.”

The hon. the President and the House permitted the hon. Member Mr. Ramaswami Mudaliyar to move his amendment dispensing with the notice required under the Standing Orders.

Mr. A. RAMASWAMI MUDALIYAR :—“ Mr. President, Sir, I am very thankful to my hon. Friend, Mr. Kesava Pillai, for having given me the opportunity of moving the amendment which I just now read to the Council. The essential part of the Resolution as now amended is that the grouping which has taken place during the last two years should be revised and that the village officers who were removed consequent on such regrouping should be reinstated. I have shown in a speech that I made on the Resolution moved by my hon. Friend Mr. Venkataramana Ayyangar regarding the revision of pay of village officers that the real difficulty which the village officers were suffering from was not so much the want of adequate pay as the fact that many of them had lost their jobs altogether. I had said on that occasion that the Government had struck a blow in the dark and that we were not at all aware of this move on the part of the Government when we were voting funds for the pay of the village officers. During the last two years a number of village officers have been taken away from their

9th February 1924] [Mr. A. Ramaswami Mudaliyar]

employment. A number of village headmen have been deprived of their duties. Amalgamation of villages is, I think, a wrong policy on the part of the Government. There is nothing so incapable of amalgamation as the village unit in India. Students of history will know what claim the village officers had in our corporate life in the past and there is none who is so anxious to restore these village units to their original position as the hon. Members of this House. Districts may be amalgamated, taluks may be joined together; but the one thing which is incapable of amalgamation is the village unit. Necessarily we have the consequent evils attached to parties in villages and everybody is aware that it is impossible to have any satisfactory administration of villages if two villages which have nothing in common to each other are amalgamated under one village headman. The position of the village headman in India is very peculiar. Government have quite correctly recognized the fact that the village headman cannot be recognized as an official. He continues to be a non-official; his pay is not really an emolument; it is considered always as an honorarium and in most cases his pay goes only towards meeting some extra charges consequent on the visit of officials or other functionaries. Under those circumstances, when once we realize the position of the village headman in a village and the duties he has to perform and the functions allotted to him both by the Government and by the village hierarchy, we necessarily recognize that the village headman is an indispensable entity. This grouping of villages has produced a great hardship. Two villages which have nothing in common to each other, the factions of two villages which have no common aims or purposes, are brought together under the administration of one single village headman and it has been found from experience during the last two years alone that this has led to a great deal of difficulty. In my own district there are cases which I have come across in which this difficulty is illustrated in more than one way. We in this part of the Presidency, as everybody knows, adopt different religions, follow different creeds and so on and the villages have so grouped themselves as to be the exponents of a particular creed or a particular faith. There is one village which I know of which is not very far from my place. It is a Christian village. Another village adjacent to it is a Hindu village. In this grouping if the village headman of the Hindu village is given charge of the Christian village, or the village headman of the Christian village is given charge of the Hindu village, there will necessarily be trouble and difficulties. Without considering all these things and without seeking public opinion on the matter, the Government had taken this step."

The hon. Sir CHARLES LODHUNTER:—"May I remind the hon. Gentleman, Sir, that a reduction in the number of villages in the district of Chingleput was urged in this House by a Christian Member representing the Chingleput district?"

12-30 p.m. Mr. A. RAMASWAMI MUDALIYAR:—"I am very sorry that either I have not studied the brilliant speech of the Christian Member, or that I have forgotten it if I ever read it."

"Sir, to come to the subject, I would ask the House whether, during all the retrenchment proposals that have been put forward by numberless Members, the idea of retrenchment of village officers was ever put forward. Except a Member here and a Member there, in this particular

[Mr. A. Ramaswami Mudaliyar] [9th February 1924]

instance all Members were of unanimous opinion that there should be no retrenchment in the village staff. I can assure the hon. the Leader of the House that to the best of my recollection there has not been any serious attempt made by any responsible Member of this House to effect retrenchment in the number of village officers. If there has been any, will the hon. the Leader of the House bear me out?"

The hon. Sir CHARLES TODHUNTER:—"Since the hon. Member appeals to me to bear him out, I cannot bear him out. I shall have the pleasure of establishing my point later by reading extracts from speeches."

Mr. A. RAMASWAMI MUDALIYAR:—"I think the hon. the Leader of the House will bear me out when I say that Government did not come forward with retrenchment proposals to amalgamate villages when he accepted the proposals of the hon. the Revenue Member for a provision of 21 lakhs of rupees for the increased pay being given to village officers and that they had no idea of either amalgamating the villages, or regrouping them, or dismissing some of the village officers."

The hon. Sir CHARLES TODHUNTER:—"They had proposals urged by an hon. Member of this House."

Diwan Bahadur P. KESAVA PILLAI:—"Any Resolution passed?"

Mr. A. RAMASWAMI MUDALIYAR:—"They had the incoherent proposals of an irresponsible body of this House."

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI:—"I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. Member right in using such language and calling a certain section of the House as irresponsible?"

Mr. A. RAMASWAMI MUDALIYAR:—"If the hon. Member had only allowed me to finish my sentence, he would have understood me that I was not out of order. I am aware, as the hon. Member is perhaps a little more, of responsible character attached to every Member of this House. I certainly have not conducted myself, nor shall I conduct myself in future in any way to give room to the criticism that has been levelled against me that I am unparliamentary in my phraseology. My hon. Friend should have a little more patience which he is supposed to have in understanding in what sense I used the term."

"I was saying before this dialectical interruption as to what the Government considered about the retrenchment proposals with regard to the village staff, that they were, so far as the Reserved subjects are concerned, irresponsible, that we are merely advisory and that we have not got the power of occupying those comfortable Treasury benches."

The hon. Mr. C. P. RAMASWAMI AYYAR:—"I assure the hon. Member that seats here are quite as uncomfortable as any other seat."

Mr. A. RAMASWAMI MUDALIYAR:—"I would tell the hon. Member that if he only changes his seat, he would find how uncomfortable my seat is."

"Now, Sir, coming to the discussion, when the hon. the Revenue Member came forward with his proposal that 21 lakhs of rupees should be voted to disburse eight months' pay to the village officers and that 30 lakhs of rupees would be required in the year of grace 1923-24, did the Government have in mind this idea of retrenchment and if they had not, when this brilliant idea dawned upon them?"

9th February 1924] [Mr. A. Ramaswami Mudaliyar]

"I quite believe, I do not know how far this is correct, that the Cabinet sent their proposals to the Board of Revenue so early as 1921. The proposals were to the effect that it was desirable to amalgamate the villages and thereby reduce the number of village officers. I wish to ask why that information was kept from the House, and why the Government stated that the consequence of the passing of a Resolution raising the pay of the village officers to Rs. 15 would be very disastrous. I think the hon. the Finance Member in a very long sentence said that, if this proposal was passed, the House would be giving a *carte blanche* to the hon. the Finance Member. That was the position taken up in April 1922, and one year before they had sent instruction to the Board of Revenue to consider the proposals of retrenchment. After this period, did the House at any time ask that some of the village officers should be removed, and that the question of amalgamation of villages should be taken up? In all the retrenchment proposals we have put forward, we have put forward other proposals and I am at a loss to understand as to how it is that this idea of retrenchment was carried out in exactly the contrary direction. Is it because of punishing us or what?"

"There is one other point I should like to mention, and that is the idea behind me in moving this Resolution is not because I want to carry out any election pledge. I have not got any election pledges in the matter and I cannot possibly have election pledges for the simple reason that I am moving on behalf of a set of persons who have been removed from office, who have been deprived of their privileges and who cannot possibly be of so much use to any candidate in an election. After I have tabled this motion, I have been deluged with telegrams and resolutions from various village officers, and nothing has given me greater satisfaction and nothing has surprised me more than the fact that the very village officers on whom Government have now conferred the appointments are the first to come forward to realize the hardship that has been imposed upon those poor village officers who have been removed from their appointments and all these officers and their associations now appeal to the Government and the hon. Members of this House to reconsider the decision of the Government and to reinstate all those village officers who have been removed from their offices as a result of regrouping.

"I am aware of the financial responsibility. I am a Member of the Finance Committee. I am aware of the very great difficulty which the hon. the Finance Member is having in trying to make both ends meet. The Finance Committee is a body which may be said to consist of misanthropes. If you turn in there with your request, everybody will say that it is hard to make both ends meet and that it is very difficult to balance the budget. The task of the Finance Member is the most uncongenial of all tasks. I am yet so convinced, and with the responsibility attached to me as a Member of the Finance Committee, I say I am so convinced of the desirability and urgency of the measure that I am moving this Resolution without any hesitation, and I trust that it will be accepted by the Government."

Diwan Bahadur M. KRISHNAN NAYAR:—"I have very great pleasure in seconding this motion. In addition to what my hon. Friend, Mr. Ramaswami Mudaliyar, said, I wish to point out some practical difficulties which are now felt by the regrouping of villages. People in villages have often

[Mr. M. Krishnan Nayar]

[9th February 1924]

to go to village officers for the purpose of doing business. In places where the people have to walk not 2, 3, 5 or 6 miles, but sometimes 10 miles to get at their village officers, it is a great hardship from the people's point of view. That alone, if no other consideration, should induce the Government to cancel their order, and to stop any further regrouping.

"For two or three villages a village munsif is appointed. The amount of work that was turned out by two or three men before is now required to be done by one man, with the result that the work turned out becomes inefficient.

"There is another point and that is these village officers have served the Government for years and years. I know of persons who have put in service of over 25 years. I know also of persons who are members of families that have been serving the Government in this capacity for generations. If these people have been asked to go out of their offices, I think it is not fair, and, unless it becomes an absolute necessity that these people must be removed from their offices, I think it is very hard indeed on the part of the Government to dismiss them from their service. This Council, I submit, did not vote for the supply for the taking of such a step. This Council voted it for giving increased pay to these village officers.

"For these and other reasons I heartily support the Resolution."

Rai Bahadur T. M. NARASIMHACHARLU:—"I heartily support the Resolution. It was I that was partly responsible—I mean in an indirect way—for this state of things. Originally I tabled a motion for increasing the pay of village officers to Rs. 12 per mensem. But my hon. Friend, Mr. Ranganatha Mudaliyar, urged that it must be raised to Rs. 15, and I accepted it, so that the Resolution was carried. The Government also in a way pledged to carry out the Resolution and accordingly carried it out. But the Government knew better than myself and all of us. So they regrouped some of the villages and the result is that though certain people were benefited, many of the villagers were deprived of their offices and their hereditary emoluments. When it was prayed that the regrouping should be applied only to village headmen and village karnams, the Government not only objected to this course, but also deprived the poor depressed classes of their offices of vettis and talaiyaris, thus depriving their means of sustenance. Sir, the result was what we never contemplated or even dreamt of. It is in that spirit, i.e., not to allow these poor people to suffer any longer, that I heartily support the motion. That is my first reason.

12-45 p.m. "Secondly, Sir, these village officers, on account of the enormous distance between villages in their charge, find it difficult to discharge their duties properly in the matter of collecting kist and the administration of villages from the police point of view. So that in course of time the administration of the whole province will become a very difficult matter indeed. If simply on account of the excess of work and the enormous responsibility that is now thrown upon them these village officers begin to non-co-operate, then the whole Government will come to a standstill."

The hon. Sir CHARLES TODHUNTER:—"May I interrupt, Sir? It was the same hon. Member who on a previous occasion said that these talaiyaris serve no useful purpose and they were a costly establishment, and the sooner they were reduced in number the better."

9th February 1924]

Rai Bahadur T. M. NARASIMHACHARLU:—"I know I did say that, but it is not of village talaiyaris but of ghaut talaiyaris in the forest."

The hon. Sir CHARLES TODHUNTER:—"May I quote what he actually said? He said that the work of the ryotwari talaiyaris is only in the collection season. For the rest of the time they did, among other things, the business of the village officers 'rocking the babies' cradle'."

Rai Bahadur T. M. NARASIMHACHARLU:—"I never used the words 'rocking the cradle'. Anyhow, I believe the Leader of the House will not be sorry to permit me to amend my views (laughter). So much for the talaiyaris."

"Then, Sir, Government may find it difficult to give effect to this Resolution and therefore may not accept it at all, because this Resolution wants that those village officers who were removed consequent on such amalgamation should be restored to their offices. Now, what is wanted is that the regrouping must be abandoned and the existing groups of villages must be subdivided. We must do this according to the Hereditary Village Officers' Act, III of 1895. According to the Act, the village officers should be selected from among the last office holders and their families, provided they are best fitted. Now, suppose the last office holder is X, and if now the village is subdivided, the members of the family of X will claim the office and they will have to be provided for under the Act. Therefore, the original persons who were ousted cannot get office under this Act. I would therefore suggest that the Government need not take shelter under that Act. I will request the Government to bring in an amendment to the Act to that effect that nothing under section 6 shall affect the subdivision of these villages. The House will be glad to pass an enabling Act like that without any amendment and any opposition. It is only then that this Resolution can be given effect to easily. Otherwise the purpose of my hon. Friend Mr. Ramaswami Mudaliyar's Resolution will be defeated. While he wanted to restore to office those who lost them owing to regrouping, it will only be perpetuating the office of the last office holder and the members of his family."

Mr. A. RAMASWAMI MUDALIYAR:—"I read the Act otherwise, Sir."

Rai Bahadur T. M. NARASIMHACHARLU:—"He has only read the Act; whereas I had been a party to administering the Act. I know in the revision preceding the last one, when some villages were subdivided, a similar contention was raised and was upheld. So much so, if A was a village officer and if the village is divided, his brother or any other member of the family capable of holding office was given office. If there were two or more offices and if there were also two or more members of the family, then all these brothers had to be provided with offices. No stranger could hope to come in. The Revenue Board also ruled in that manner and the Collectors also followed that ruling. What I am saying is not an imaginary thing. I wish the hon. Member brings in an amending Act and we will all help him in carrying it through. For these reasons I heartily support the motion notwithstanding what I may have said on a former occasion."

Rao Bahadur O. TANIKACHALA CHETTIYAR:—"Sir, I have great pleasure in associating myself with this Resolution. To have an idea of the extent of hardship experienced by this regrouping and amalgamation of these villages, you have only to look at the figures supplied to my hon. Friend,

[Mr. O. Tanikachala Chettiyan] [9th February 1924]

Diwan Bahadur P. Kesava Pillai, in answer to his interpellation. It shows that in ryotwari tracts alone, out of a total strength of 88,336 village officers, as many as 16,338 have been dispensed with. It works out to 2 out of every 11 officers, or roughly 18 per cent. As for the fears of my hon. Friend, Mr. B. Muniswami Nayudu, that the same relief that is extended by this Resolution to the village officers of the ryotwari tracts may not be extended to those in the proprietary tracts, I may tell him that the picture there is not so very appalling as it is in the ryotwari villages. The number reduced in those villages is only 270 as against a total strength of 29,287. One officer for every 108 or 109 is disbanded."

Mr. B. MUNISWAMI NAYUDU:—"The Revenue Board has on 29th September proposed still more drastic reductions."

Rao Bahadur O. TANIKACHALA CHETTIYAR:—"I am not speaking of what was intended; I know only what has been carried out. It is these village officers who form the bedrock of the revenue and police administration of the country. What an amount of injury is done to the country by disbanding as many as 18 per cent of these officers? Also, according to the provision of the Village Officers Act when these persons are dismissed from service on account of regrouping or amalgamation, notwithstanding the hereditary nature of the appointment held by them even for 200 years or more, they have no claim upon the Government. Sir, when such a large number of influential officers are let loose upon the country without the prestige and the emoluments to which they are entitled, what wonder is there that they go about misrepresenting the intentions of Government? In that case political propagandists like my Friend Mr. Satyamurti will have the field ready for them to go and preach to them the intentions of Government."

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI:—"Sir, on a point of personal explanation, I want my hon. Friend to explain what he means. I have no objection to be called a political propagandist. I know I am one and I am proud of it. But I want him to say whether he puts me in that class of discontented village officers who go about misrepresenting the intentions of Government. The intentions of Government are so obvious that they need not be misrepresented. But, if he includes me in that category, I should ask him to apologise, Sir."

Rao Bahadur O. TANIKACHALA CHETTIYAR:—"No personal explanation is necessary, Sir. He is an avowed exponent of the non-co-operation propaganda. As to what it means, he knows much better than I. I do not say that he misrepresented, but that he has a following made ready for him by Government in the work that he has set himself to do, by the way in which they have disbanded these village officers."

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI:—"I may respectfully say that I expect practically the whole of the country to be with me if they know where they stand."

Rao Bahadur O. TANIKACHALA CHETTIYAR:—"And along with those disbanded servants of Government."

"Sir, that being so, is the amount saved by Government sufficient for the price they are paying in the shape of the discontent that is created in the country? They are obliged to increase the police forces and pay more; they

9th February 1924] [Mr. O. Tanikachala Chettiayar]

are obliged to maintain more commodious and comfortable jails. These things would not be necessary if there were no discontent and disorder by reason of the large number of discontented persons going about the country. Sir, after all, the amount saved is only 18 or 19 lakhs of rupees as stated in the Retrenchment Committee's report. When this proposition for increasing the pay of the village officers was first brought forward by hon. Members who were elected to the last Council in the exuberance of their enthusiasm, little did they realize the dangers to which these village officers were going to be exposed by reason of their recommendation. Now that the results of the Resolution are known, well might the village officers exclaim, 'Save us from our friends in the Legislative Council'. For this Resolution to increase the pay of the village officers added to the burden of Government and they tried to meet it by additional taxation for which leave was refused. But even when leave was refused, Government might have told the House that they would not be able to give effect to the Resolution unless taxation was imposed and that otherwise they would have to cut down the number of village officers. They might have asked the House to reconsider their decision. I believe that was not done. Now that the evil effects of reduction and amalgamation on such a large scale are known, it behoves every one of us to sympathize with the hardship that has been experienced and attempt to redress it.

"I may at this time draw the attention of the House to a question which I put as early as December last to which an answer was vouchsafed to me the day before yesterday. I asked whether the Government have bestowed any consideration on the hardship caused to these village officers who have been disbanded, in how many of these cases appeals were preferred to the Collector and in how many of these cases Government have revised the orders of the Divisional Officer. The Government replied that the statistics could not be got since it would throw an additional burden on the Collector. The hardship experienced by 16,313 families let loose upon this world without any provision does not disturb the hon. Member in charge of the department so much as the additional work that will be thrown upon the Collector. What is worse than this, Sir, is when I asked in how many cases the Board of Revenue has revised the orders of the Collector, I get the reply 'Government do not intend to ask the Board to undertake this task'. They do not want the Board of Revenue to undertake this stupendous task of counting the number of appeals received and the number of appeals disposed of. My own information, Sir, is that hardly any appeal was favourably considered. A great deal of hardship has been caused in the competition as to who shall be retained and who shall be thrown out. There is a good deal of heart-burning since injustice is done. The Board of Revenue does not interfere effectively. In all cases of appeals they give the answer: 'The Board sees no reason to interfere.'

"Naturally one puts himself the question put in this House three years ago, what utility is the Board of Revenue serving, if after
1 p.m. keeping these files for a long time, they would only send a stereotyped reply 'the Board sees no reason to interfere'. In one case, Sir, a village officer was selected out of two village officers of whom one had to be dismissed, and then it was stipulated that he should remain in the village and was put in charge of the bigger of the two villages. Then six days after this, the very same man was appointed as village munsif of

[Mr. O. Tanikachala Chettiyar] [9th February 1924]

another set of three villages in the taluks of Tirupati, Vellore and Arni. This is the way in which things are being administered. A costly institution like the Board of Revenue, instead of doing justice, sends out the usual formal reply 'the Board sees no reason to interfere.' Under these circumstances, when a large number of people have been deprived of their office under a scheme of retrenchment and when in the exercise of it hardships are brought to its notice, it declines to interfere and says 'no reason to interfere', are the people not justified in feeling aggrieved at the way things are done by the Board of Revenue, and can it be expected to still continue to adorn the administration of the country? For this and various other reasons, I have great pleasure in supporting this Resolution."

Mr. R. SRINIVASA AYYANGAR:—"Mr. President, as one who has given notice of an almost identical amendment as the one now under discussion, I have great pleasure in lending my support to it. It is true that in the amendment that has been moved, we come across the word 'village officers' which is not unlikely to create the impression in the minds of some of the hon. Members that this may operate to the detriment of the village menials. For, I take it that in the Village Officers' Manual issued by the Madras Government we come across two sets of officers, viz., village officers as distinguished from village menials. But when we turn to the Act proper, the term used there is 'hereditary village officers'. I understand that the words 'village officers' in the amendment now before the House, are intended to connote persons who hold hereditary village offices. Therefore, I take it that the expression is not used here in the limited sense of the term to which we are accustomed, but in the broader, in the wider, in the more legally acceptable notions of the term. It is in that view of the matter that I have ventured to interfere and I do not propose to move my amendment.

"Hon. Members of this House may be aware that the discussion that centred round the Resolution moved by my hon. Friend from Coimbatore emphasised the hardships and inconveniences entailed by the grouping of villages. If some of the hon. Members thought it necessary to vote against that Resolution, it was not because they felt that there was anything intrinsically wrong or radically defective in that, but they felt that it was not advisable at that stage for them to commit the Government to two items of expenditure, viz., 17,00,000, which the acceptance of that motion of my hon. Friend Mr. Venkataramana Ayyangar might have entailed, and also another item of expenditure, viz., 19.82 lakhs, which the acceptance of this motion might necessitate. For, the opinion reflected by the Council at that time was deliberately against grouping of the villages. Member after Member laid stress on that point. Some of them even then had an idea of bringing in a Resolution of this character, and forcing it on the Government, but they did not want to commit the Government to the two items of expenditure referred to by me and it was that feeling which influenced most of the Members in voting against that Resolution. (Mr. A. Ramaswami Mudaliyar: hear, hear.)

"Now, the hon. Member from Chingleput tells us that the Government has treated this House with scant courtesy. The Government have not at any time taken us into their confidence. We had not the remotest idea that this sort of regrouping was ever likely to be forced upon us at the time when the matter was brought forward."

9th February 1924]

The hon. Sir CHARLES TODHUNTER :—“ May I ask the hon. Gentleman whether he did not press this regrouping upon us? May I ask if this is not a correct quotation of his speech made on the 18th February 1922 ?

‘ By this process, I expect or anticipate a reduction of at least 100 vattams in my district. I make this statement deliberately, for in the local official gazette of my district I came across the notification over the signature of the Collector of the district publishing this proposal and inviting objections thereto. If this is carried into effect, it will lead to a reduction of not less than 100 vattams and thereby a considerable reduction of establishment, which costs about Rs. 500 in each vattam. Therefore, by reducing 100 vattams in my district, the Government will be able to make a saving of not less than Rs. 50,000. If the same process is adopted throughout the whole presidency, I think they can save at least 10 lakhs of rupees.’

Is he not responsible for this regrouping ?”

Mr. R. SRINIVASA AYYANGAR :—“ It is not that I do not want to take any responsibility for that statement. It is true that I made that statement then, but then I had not the slightest idea of the drastic changes that were going to overtake us. That is my real feeling in the matter. At that time statistics were not available and we were not aware to what extent this retrenchment axe would go. Moreover, the Government did not place their proposals before this House. My feeling is that this axe has been driven very deep with the result that we find now a deep gushing wound for which there is absolutely no justification. As the hon. Member from Chingleput said, I have had representations made to me not only by the ryots, but also by some of the village officers. In fact, by this regrouping or amalgamation, even the few village officers who have been retained are not satisfied. When I question them as to how they get on with their new work, they say that they are unable to discharge their duties efficiently and diligently. That is the situation and there is no helping it. As the hon. the Mover has told us, it is high time to put a stop to this kind of policy. By this policy of amalgamation, the prestige of hereditary village officers, which they value highly and which they are anxious to preserve and maintain at any cost, has ceased to exist. We find that by a sudden stroke of the pen as many as over 16,000 men have been disbanded and thrown out of employ, and, so far as my district is concerned, 820 persons have been thrown out of employ, and I implore the hon. the Revenue Member and the hon. the Finance Member to place themselves for the time being in the position of those unfortunate men on whom all on a sudden and without any previous warning the guillotine has been applied and who have been thrown overboard. I venture to submit, therefore, and I hope I will not be misunderstood, that the policy embarked upon by the Board of Revenue is a shortsighted one and I do not think the Board of Revenue or the Government realised adequately the far-reaching consequences into which the grouping of the villages might necessarily land them and also land the other people.

“ Sir, I may be permitted to refer to one other point. I hope the hon. Member is aware of the fact that village officers have got a certain amount of prestige, they being considered by the people as the representatives of the Government in the village. Now, by the appointment of a single officer for a village covering an area of 30 square miles, it is impossible in the very nature of things to expect to get things done satisfactorily. It is also likely to tell upon the usefulness of this officer to the ryots at large. Therefore, from the point of view of the ryot, as well as from the point of view of the

[Mr. R. Srinivasa Ayyangar] [9th February 1924]

Government, I submit that this regrouping must go. From the point of view of respecting the feelings of the hereditary village officers who attach a considerable weight to this office, this grouping must go, because, in many districts, this office is being filled by one and the same family for 150 years, if not more. These people attach a great deal of weight to this office and it is impossible to make them reconcile themselves to the circumstances. They say 'we are all poor people living from hand to mouth and all of us have been turned out of employ. On the contrary, you go on increasing the staff and also increasing the pay of the higher officers.' They view the Reforms in this light.

"Mr. Tanikachala Chettiyar put the case of the village officers as the bed-rock upon which the administration rests. I may illustrate this further. One of these unfortunate men told me—I do not know if it was in a moment of despair—that if there was no change of heart on the part of the Government, this Government would have to repent for it in the near future. I do not think, therefore, that the Government should stick to a course of action which, probably for the sake of economy it has embarked upon. With these few words, I beg leave to support the Resolution in the full hope that the Government will not think it too late to go back upon the steps taken by them."

Mr. P. ANJANEYULU:—"Sir, in the light of the remarks made by the previous speaker and as it has the consent of the House, I beg to move an amendment to the amendment before the House, viz., to add the words 'and menials' after the words 'village officers' so that it may be more clear."

Mr. K. KOTI REDDI:—"I second it."

The hon. Sir CHARLES TODHUNTER:—"May I draw the attention of the hon. Member to the fact that the removal of menials has not always been a consequence of amalgamation and that there have been reductions independently of any amalgamation?"

Mr. P. ANJANEYULU:—"As far as my amendment goes, it refers only to those who are reduced in consequence of regrouping."

Diwan Bahadur P. KESAVA PILLAI:—"I have no objection to accept the amendment."

The hon. Mr. C. P. RAMASWAMI AYYAR:—"I thought, Sir, that the hon. Member was asking for the leave of the House to permit him to move his amendment."

The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"Is it the pleasure of the House to allow the amendment of Mr. Anjaneyulu to go forward without notice?"

The House signified its assent.

Rao Bahadur T. A. RAMALINGA CHETTIYAR:—"May I point out, Sir, that the word 'menials' finds a place in the amendment tabled by Mr. R. Srinivasa Ayyangar?"

The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"It has not been moved."

Rao Bahadur T. A. RAMALINGA CHETTIYAR:—"It has not been moved, but another Member now moves it."

9th February 1924]

Mr. E. W. LEGH :—“ Does the hon. the Mover of the Resolution accept the amendment of Mr. Anjaneyulu, Sir ? ”

Diwan Bahadur P. KESAVA PILLAI :—“ Yes, Sir, I accept it.”

The amendment was allowed to go forward.

Mr. P. ANJANEYULU :—“ Sir, I beg to move that the words ‘ and menials ’ be inserted after the words ‘ village officers ’ in this motion under discussion.

“ I hope this House will allow this amendment. It is hardly necessary for me to make a big speech, because it was possibly the original intention of the hon. the Mover of this proposition to include them also. Of course, we have been told by the hon. Member, Mr. Tanikachala Chettiyar, that the hon. Members of the House previous to this were directly or indirectly responsible for this unfortunate state of affairs. The hon. the Leader of the House also treated us to the previous speeches wherein this regrouping was permitted by some Members of this House. And, Sir, it is up to these village officers who put their faith in the Members to say ‘ O Lord, save us from our friends.’ So that they never thought that the increase of pay which they were praying for would involve the reduction of such large numbers of these officers who had been in the field for centuries. They never expected that after such long service they would be thrown out of employment. That was the result of their prayers and the so-called increase of pay and prospects has been effected like this. Besides, this has given rise to a good lot of trouble to which reference has already been made by the previous Speakers. One of them is that the assistant karnam who draws the same pay of Rs. 15 along with the head karnam, has to be in the same village, and human vanity might perhaps be tickled, and he would say that he himself is of equal status with the head karnam. This is the case not in different villages but in the same village, and this gives rise to a considerable amount of quarrelsomeness and factions. As regards the menials on whose behalf I am just allowed, by the courtesy of the House, to move this amendment, they have been occupying the posts for long years, possibly most of them are over 50, 60 and 70 years old, and at this hour of the day that they should be turned out and asked to seek other avocations in life is unfair and harsh. Under these circumstances, I request that this House may unanimously vote for this proposition and I have great pleasure in commending it for the acceptance of the House.”

Mr. K. KOTI REDDI seconded the motion.

The hon. the RAJA OF KOLLENGODE :—“ Mr. President, several Resolutions and amendments have been tabled more or less on similar terms recommending to the Government that further regrouping of villages may be forthwith stopped, and that the grouping of villages effected since August 1922 be cancelled, and that the original units of villages restored reinstating into office the village officers and menials affected thereby. There is apparently a strong body of opinion in this Council in favour of this Resolution, and so I have bestowed my full and anxious consideration on the recommendations and examined whether anything can now be done to meet the wishes so clearly indicated. I regret to say that I find that the recommendations brought forward cannot be accepted on financial grounds, however much we are in sympathy with those whom the recommendations are intended to

[The Raja of Kollengode]

[9th February 1924]

benefit. In fact, no one can sympathise more with the village officers than their employers themselves who know their work and have to get work out of them.

“The position at present as I find it is this. While regrouping of villages are usually undertaken as a matter of administrative necessity, the present policy of regrouping had to be adopted primarily as a measure of retrenchment intended to reduce to some extent the increased expenditure consequent on the revision of pay which was undertaken at the behest of the Legislative Council. I think I should state what led to the revision of pay, what it has cost Government, and what the savings are by the regrouping of villages that has been effected and will be effected in the future.

“In the year 1920 the Salaries Committee, of which Mr. Marjoribanks was the president, went into the question of revision of pay of village officers, and, while recommending increase of pay to karnams and menials in ryotwari areas, suggested that the monigars be abolished and replaced by process servers, and that the number of menials be reduced where possible. Government accepted these recommendations and accordingly raised the minimum pay of karnams and menials to Rs. 15 and Rs. 8 respectively with effect from 1st April 1920, and also asked the Board of Revenue to replace monigars by process servers, and to reduce the number of menials. The Board accordingly proceeded with the reduction of menials and also with the regrouping of light karnams' charges and similarly of headmen's charges and also revised the pay, which resulted in an immediate increase of Rs. 36·07 lakhs per annum in the cost of village establishment. Afterwards, on the 6th August 1921, the Legislative Council passed a Resolution recommending that the pay of village headmen and monigars be raised to not less than Rs. 15 per mensem. In the meanwhile, the village officers in proprietary areas also agitated for an increase of pay. It was, therefore, decided by Government on 20th March 1922 that the pay of village officers should be increased and that corresponding reduction should be effected by regrouping, and orders were accordingly issued revising the pay and the Board was also asked to consider the possibility of reduction by regrouping of villages. This revision in 1922 involved a further extra expenditure of about 30·22 lakhs per annum. The Council will, therefore, notice that the revision of pay effected since 1920 comes to 66·29 lakhs of rupees. The savings ordered by the Board up to 20th September 1923 amounted to 18·92 lakhs. Thus, as against an increased expenditure of Rs. 66·29 lakhs, there is a saving of about Rs. 18·92 lakhs so far, and when the regrouping is completed in all the districts, it may amount to a further saving of about 10 lakhs.

“Early in 1922, when the revision of pay was under consideration, the Government introduced two Taxation Bills with the object of raising funds for the express purpose of meeting the additional cost of village officers. These were thrown out, and, in the course of the discussion on one of the Bills, some Members suggested that the obvious course to raise the required money was to effect retrenchment by regrouping the villages as was then being done in the South Arcot district. Mr. R. Srinivasa Ayyangar who has tabled one of the Resolutions and also proposed the amendment expressed himself thus :

“There is another matter to which I wish to draw the attention of the House and it is this : in my district of South Arcot some months ago I came across a notification proposing the reduction of vattams and regrouping some of the villages in certain cases in such a way as to group some of them under one vattam. By this process I expect or anticipate a reduction of at least 100 vattams in my district. I make this statement deliberately ; for in the local official gazette of my

9th February 1924]

[The Raja of Kollengode]

district I came across the notification over the signature of the Collector of the district publishing this proposal and inviting objections thereto. If this is carried into effect, it will lead to a reduction of not less than 100 vattams and thereby a considerable reduction of establishment which costs about Rs. 500 in each vattam. Therefore, by reducing 100 vattams in my district, the Government will be able to make a saving of not less than Rs. 50,000. If the same process is adopted throughout the whole Presidency, I think, they can save at least 10 lakhs of rupees. I expected the hon. the Revenue Member to give us some idea of this in his opening remarks, but he did not make the slightest reference to this fact.'

"Another Member, Mr. T. Arumainatham Pillai, who followed him, drew attention to the above suggestion and said :

'My hon. Friend, Mr. R. Srinivasa Ayyangar, gave one method by which the expenditure can be reduced. What he stated about the district of South Arcot is equally true with the other district. So far as the district of Chingleput is concerned, I may say boldly that several villages can be grouped together and a number of appointments could conveniently be reduced.'

"The Member from Tanjore, Mr. V. Pakkiriswami Pillai, suggested the appointment of one officer to do the duties of both the karnam and headman and his speech was to this effect :

'While the educational qualification of these karnams and headmen of villages is not what it was some years ago, a karnam may be asked to do both the works and the Government will then be able to find funds. I believe there are three or four vettis and talaiyaris in each village and they seem to have their own permanent work to do. Most of these vettis and talaiyaris are always engaged in doing the household duties of the karnams and headmen, such as drawing water for use in their houses, washing their cloths, and sometimes rocking the cradle and lulling their children to sleep. The karnams have got very little work to do. They have got work only during certain months of the year, i.e., during the time of ploughing and transplanting. They have to send their reports of single and double crops, etc., to their taluk offices. Of course, they very often unnecessarily go to headquarters of their superiors. But the work at present is not so difficult as it once was. I would, therefore, suggest that one man can do both the works of karnam and the headman of the village.'

"Such were the deliberate and bold suggestions that were made here by the Members of Council and Government agreed with those views for good reasons.

"The Council will thus see that, while there were suggestions for revision of pay, there were also suggestions from prominent Members of the Legislative Council for the regrouping of villages in order to reduce the establishments. The increase of pay of village officers and their establishments and the reduction of their number to effect some retrenchment were always considered as one scheme and now what is proposed is to give effect to the increase of 66.29 lakhs and to sacrifice the saving of about 29 lakhs. I ask the Members of this Council, knowing as they do the financial position of the province, whether this is a practical proposition and one which Government can possibly accept? It can be effected only by further taxation which, as has been found, was objected to by the Council. The questions, therefore, that should be borne in mind in the consideration of this Resolution are these :—

(1) Is it possible to forego this saving and undertake so large an increase of expenditure without new taxation?

(2) Whether taxation would be more acceptable or whether the less unpopular measure is to be adopted.

(3) Is it right to suggest that more officers should be maintained in these days of financial difficulties when evidently the department can work with a smaller staff?

(4) Whether after all, there is not real room for the reduction of these officers in view of the fact that the village officers are not really whole-time officers and have very little work to do.

[The Raja of Kollengode]

[9th February 1924]

(5) When we offer better pay, is it not reasonable that we might demand a little more work from them?

"I realize that there is considerable difficulty for the representatives of the people in this Council to overcome the pressure put on them by an influential section of the people who have lost their appointments."

Mr. A. RAMASWAMI MUDALIYAR:—"We deny that any pressure was brought to bear, Sir."

The hon. the RAJA OF KOLLENGODE:—"You may deny it but it is a fact, I know."

Diwan Bahadur M. KRISHNAN NAYAR:—"But I know that the contrary is the fact from personal experience."

The hon. the RAJA OF KOLLENGODE:—"They are all anxious to get back their appointments at any cost. It would no doubt have been better if their pay had not been revised to the extent that it has been as we all know that very few of them attach any importance to their pay, but hold their office more for the prestige and dignity of it than for anything else. If indeed all these officers must be retained and the regrouping must be done away with, the only possible way of doing it at present would be by reverting to the old state of things in their entirety including their pay, or by enabling Government to find money for it by a Village Cess Act. Unless some such definite and practical proposal is put forward, it is impossible for Government to accept the Resolution. But if any practical proposal is placed before us, I may assure you that it will be considered fully and sympathetically. Having embarked on the scheme after careful deliberation we cannot but complete it, for, we cannot leave some districts untrenched and others retrenched. In coming to a decision on this important Resolution, I hope the Members of this Council will not be guided by mere sentiments or sympathy, but will take a responsible and practical view of the matter. I regret that, as matters now stand, I am unable to find my way either to accept the amendment, or any of the Resolutions on this subject."

Mr. C. V. VENKATARAMANA AYYANGAR:—"May I know, Sir, how long we are to sit to-day?"

The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"It will be till the usual time."

Mr. C. V. VENKATARAMANA AYYANGAR:—"Is it till 5 o'clock, Sir?"

The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"We have got a certain amount of business on the Agenda. If all that business is over before 5 o'clock, we shall close before 5, otherwise we shall adjourn at 5."

Mr. E. W. LEGH:—"I think we are to sit for a day, Sir, from the time the hon. Sir Arthur Knapp finished his motion on the supplementary grant yesterday. I think it was half-past three yesterday afternoon when that motion was finished."

The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"I may inform the hon. Member that, so far as I can gather from what my predecessor did, in the matter of working out the total allotted by His Excellency the Governor, there is to be no hard and fast calculation of 24 hours. If we reach a second day, we ordinarily go on as long as the business justifies us. I do not think that anything is gained by a very strict calculation of the day."

9th February 1924]

The hon. Sir ARTHUR KNAPP :—" I may be permitted to offer one remark, Sir, so far as what I understood it to be during the discussion of yesterday. There was a distinct reference to the extension of the sitting of the House to a period equivalent to the time occupied by me in moving for the supplementary grant yesterday. I may be mistaken, Sir, but there was a distinct reference to this period and what I understood was that we should sit to-day till 3 p.m., the particular time when the Government business was completed."

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—" It was my first impression that the House would probably come to an arrangement by giving up a certain amount of time yesterday and taking up an equivalent time to-day on account of the hon. Sir Arthur Knapp's motion. But afterwards, I think the House will recollect that we came to the conclusion that non-official business would not begin till the hon. Sir Arthur Knapp should have concluded his particular motion. That was concluded at about half-past three, and I do not remember saying that the day should be reckoned as 24 hours from that moment. All things considered, I think we may go on to-day with the business set out in the Agenda, this being a day for non-official business. Even during budget time the day is only reckoned by a day and half a day and not by any smaller fraction of a day."

The Council then adjourned for lunch at 1-40 p.m.

After lunch, 2-30 p.m.

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—" The discussion of the motion of Mr. Kesava Pillai will be resumed."

MR. A. RANGANATHA MUDALIYAR :—" Sir, the hon. Members who have preceded me urged as one of the reasons in support of this motion that it was cruel to turn the hard-working and ill-paid village officers out into the streets as a result of the regrouping of the villages. I would wish to view this question, Sir, from another point of view, firstly, from that of the Government, and, secondly, from that of the people in the villages. I say it is wrong for the Government to embark on this scheme, because it would be setting a bad precedent, namely, to go back on their plighted word, so to speak. Most of those appointments are hereditary, and I do not think any money compensation will be adequate for the loss of the hereditary rights which the regrouping of the villages almost invariably involves. They have been relying on the hereditary character of the appointments, and I think they have a right to expect that this system will continue. It is wrong, I say, for the Government to take advantage of the fact that their pay has been enhanced and deny them the privilege which they measure beyond all things.

" I speak again from the point of view of the people. They do not like that their villages should be deprived of this visible symbol of law and order. It is true that the village headmen are very humble folk ; it is true that they do not get a high pay ; and yet they stand there in the villages as a visible embodiment, or rather a visible symbol, of the Government behind them. They do exercise a sort of moral influence which is all for the good. Taken as a whole, I may refer, for example, to the innumerable cases in which there is a miscarriage of justice, because of alleged delays in the submission of reports of crime to the proper authorities. The magistrate in the course of the inquiry puts very often the question, ' When was the report first made to the police or to the village magistrate ? ' ; if the village magistrate has made a delay of a few hours, the trying magistrate looks upon the whole thing with a good

[Mr. A. Ranganatha Mudaliyar] [9th February 1924]

deal of suspicion, wondering what he may not have done in the interval or how he may not have distorted the facts, and says, 'I discount the report of the village magistrate owing to the delay in its submission and acquit the accused.' This is the state of affairs when you have got a village magistrate almost for every village. Imagine then what is bound to take place if you regroup villages and put one village headman in charge of many villages situated at considerable distances one from the other. Such delays will be more frequent, and I do submit that it will lead to chaos and disorder and many instances of injustice also. So, either from the point of view of the people or of the Government, I think it is very objectionable to proceed with this regrouping of villages.

"The hon. the Revenue Member put forward his plea on the score of the cost involved, and he said that this extra cost should somehow or other be recovered from the establishment whose pay had been raised. I would like to know whether this principle is to be exclusively applied to the village establishment only, or whether it is capable of application to other services as well (hear, hear). Did the Government, for example, when they raised the pay of the Imperial and the Provincial services, consider the question whether it would be possible for them to effect economies by abolishing certain posts or by regrouping of districts or divisions? I do not know whether they ever considered it at all, and even if they considered it, I think they would have dismissed the idea almost as quickly as they conceived it. But when the question of village officers comes up, all sorts of possibilities open up before them. They think they should do away with some people and redistribute the villages among those left behind. I object to this regrouping, Sir, because in very many districts there has been already a regrouping once. For instance, take the case of the Bellary district. I went through a report only this day and in that I find that in the five taluks, Harpanahalli, Hadagalli, Hospet and two others at the time of the last settlement there were one thousand and odd revenue villages which after resettlement dwindled into five hundred and odd. I ask whether they are going to apply this method of regrouping time after time and reduce the whole machinery of administration to an impossibility. I submit, Sir, they should not. So, I raise my voice against this proposal. Still I do not want to be technical and urge that no reduction of cost is possible at all. If the hon. the Revenue Member really feels that there is no possibility of otherwise effecting economies, I ask him whether he was pleased to consult non-official opinion or the village establishment. Did he take us into his confidence and ask us, 'Will you tell me what we can do to retain the establishment as it is and at the same time find the necessary means to carry it on?' I submit that such a thing has not been done, and if you are"

The hon. the RAJA OF KOLLENGODE:—"May I say that one day you are asking to do the regrouping and another day not to do it? In those circumstances, I think it is not fit to ask."

Mr. A. RANGANATHA MUDALIYAR:—"I am much obliged to the hon. Member for his admission."

"I say that if you go to the village officers and tell them: 'Will you suggest a way to keep you going on and at the same time not lead us into bankruptcy?' You will find a way of getting back, though not all the Rs. 26 lakhs the hon. the Revenue Member is thinking of, at least an appreciable part of the sum."

9th February 1924]

The hon. the RAJA OF KOLLENGODE:—"May I say that it is never too late to make proposals of the kind?"

Mr. A. RANGANATHA MUDALIYAR:—"Quite so. If the Government will say that they will revert to the old order of things, then it will be time enough for us to say how we can find the money. They cannot have all the things at the same time. We go on retrenching. The next day the Government spend the money so saved on objects on which we do not want it to be spent. This makes us so much disinclined to find the money for you. Because that money may be diverted for purposes for which we do not intend it to be spent. If the hon. Member gives the assurance that it will not be so, we shall find him if not Rs. 26 lakhs, at least a good slice of it."

The hon. Sir CHARLES TODHUNTER:—"Sir, the hon. the Mover has, I understand, been going round depositing blocks of stone in the Chambers of other Members of Government. But he has not presented me with one."

Diwan Bahadur P. KESAVA PILLAI:—"I have plenty to present the hon. Member with."

The hon. Sir CHARLES TODHUNTER:—"If he has spared me such a visitation, I gather it is because he proposes to hang a mill-stone round my neck in the Council Chamber itself. Or is it a stone of Sisyphus which he proposes to present to me? If so, I can assure him that I have one already. For five long years, I and those associated with me have been attempting to roll the Sisyphus stone of the Madras finances up the hill of prosperity and have had it cast back on us by flood, by pestilence, by plague and by famine year after year, and now, when we have got to a point nearer the summit than we have ever reached before, my hon. Friend and those who are with him propose to add their weight to that of the stone and hurl us down to the foot again. Sir, I do ask in all seriousness for some practical sympathy for the unfortunate people that are responsible for the finances of this Presidency. The hon. Member for Chingleput has told us that attendance at half a dozen meetings of the Finance Committee has turned him into a misanthrope. I ask what must be the condition of those who are engaged year in and year out in an apparently hopeless struggle to make both ends meet. The hon. the Mover in a passage which touched my heart, referring to the enormous tribute levied from us by the Government of India, said that the reason why it was levied was that we paid our village officers so little and so had money of which that Government could rob us. May I remind him that one of the Government of India's strongest criticisms upon our administration is the enormous cost of the collection of our revenues, in other words, the enormous cost of our village establishment?"

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI:—"May I ask the hon. Member for the figures of any other province in regard to the revenue collection?"

The hon. Sir CHARLES TODHUNTER:—"I am sorry I cannot give the figures out of my head. But, speaking very much subject to correction, my recollection is that it is something like 21 per cent in Madras, while others go down to 5 per cent."

"I hope, Sir, that I am as conscious as any one else of the value of the services of these village officers, but I am afraid that gentlemen who do not have to deal directly with the figures are not so conscious as I have the misfortune to be of the proportion which the cost of that establishment bears to the whole budget. It is not a question, Sir, of just one small item among a

[Sir Charles Todhunter]

[9th February 1924]

number of others. It is not a question of abolishing a few higher posts and providing for hundreds of deserving men. The cost of the village establishments alone, without anything else, is an item comparable with the whole cost of the police, with the whole cost of education in the Presidency, and if you abolished every officer in all the Imperial Services without a pension, you would not save enough thereby to pay for all the increases which the Council have demanded on behalf of the village staff.

“ This being the case, we have been confronted for many years past, since long before the Reforms, with the alternatives of a large staff on a small pay and a much smaller staff on a larger scale of remuneration. It has been suggested in several places that the matter is one of which the Council have had no notice, but the hon. the Mover ought to have dispelled that idea when he reminded hon. Members that he first began hammering at the matter, with those shrewd blows which only he can deal, as long as 11 years ago. The old Government considered the matter anxiously then and later and came to the conclusion that it really was impossible to make a change, not because they did not recognize that the salaries were low, but because there was to be set against that fact the fact that, owing to the other attractions of the posts, many candidates were available for every vacancy, or in the hon. the Mover's words, there was a scramble for the posts, while any attempt to raise the salaries to a figure corresponding to that for other similar work would mean a crippling of the finances of the Presidency for all time to come.

“ The hon. the Revenue Member has already invited the attention of the House to the later history of the matter. It was first examined by the Salaries Committee, which was a Committee almost entirely of Members of the Council, in 1919 and 1920. They proposed a moderate increase of pay to the karnams, leaving the village headmen as honorary officers, the abolition of the monigars and a reduction in the number of the menials. Even these proposals, when reduced to concrete figures, resulted in an increase in the cost of the staff from Rs. 71 lakhs to Rs. 116 lakhs. The Committee recognized the difficulty and saw no means of meeting it. They considered at the time the possibility of a revision of charges and found no objection to an amalgamation of charges as such. Their objection was that such amalgamation, as they contemplated, would cost more instead of less. This is a view that was not shared by this Council. In the discussion of the first budget after the Reforms, we were presented with proposals for reducing the staff: thus the hon. Member Mr. Narasimhachari, who I am glad to see now admits his responsibility, said: ‘ In this country, where the Government has long been settled, where it has been carried on in an orderly manner and where the people are docile and law-abiding, it should be possible to re-arrange the districts, divisions and taluks into units of greater dimensions and thus reduce the establishments from top to bottom. . . . ’ He said further: ‘ Among the lower grades of service, keep only such number as are absolutely necessary for the upkeep of efficiency, pay them decently, keep them contented and make them work wholeheartedly and well. There is no necessity for an army of low-paid, discontented and half-hearted public servants.’ He apparently did not contemplate, like Mr. Tanikachala Chettiyar, the danger of an army of unemployed, but added: ‘ These are the main principles which should, in my humble opinion, guide the Government in the direction of effecting retrenchment and economy.’ ”

[8th February 1924]

A.—(a) & (d) The Government must decline to answer questions relating to the organization and duties of the Special Branch as to do so would be to the detriment of the public interest.

(b) The information is given in the annexed statement.*

(c) The Personal Assistant is in general charge of the Criminal Investigation Branch and the Finger Print Bureau but the details of his work cannot be given. His pay is that of Superintendent of Police plus a duty allowance of Rs. 200 per mensem.

(e) No special pay is given to the clerks, but houses are rented for them subject to a maximum of Rs. 60 per mensem to the head clerk and Rs. 50 per mensem to each of the other clerks.

MR. S. SATYAMURTI :—“ With reference to the answers given to clauses (a) and (d), may I request the hon. the Law Member to state whether the Government can give us any detailed reasons, apart from the vague answer ‘that the Government must decline to answer questions relating to the organization’ ? ”

The hon. Mr. C. P. RAMASWAMI AYYAR :—“ In the very nature of things, I cannot give any further answer.”

MR. C. V. VENKATARAMANA AYYANGAR :—“ May I say, Sir, that it is one of the duties of hon. Members on the Government Benches to answer ? ”

MR. S. SATYAMURTI :—“ Is it a fact that the officers in this Department are all non-Indians ? ”

The hon. Mr. C. P. RAMASWAMI AYYAR :—“ That is a fact.”

MR. S. SATYAMURTI :—“ May I know the reason why they are non-Indians ? ”

The hon. Mr. C. P. RAMASWAMI AYYAR :—“ So they are.”

MR. S. SATYAMURTI :—“ May I know, with reference to the answer given in clause (e), why they should be given special allowance subject to a maximum of Rs. 60 ? I know what the nature of their duty is.”

The hon. Mr. C. P. RAMASWAMI AYYAR :—“ I must decline to answer that.”

Constitution of districts, divisions and taluks.

Statement showing number of village officers affected by the regrouping of villages.

418 Q.—Diwan Bahadur P. KESAVA PILLAI : Will the hon. the Member for Revenue be pleased to furnish—

(i) a statement showing the total number of village officers and of menials before the grouping of the villages was ordered, and their number after the grouping so far completed for each district; and

(ii) a statement containing the number of persons whose services have been dispensed with, in consequence of the grouping, in each district under the following heads :—

(1) Village magistrates.

(2) Village monigars.

(3) Karnams.

(4) Talaiyaris.

(5) Vettis.

(6) Nirgantis.

(7) Ghaut talaiyaris ?

[Sir Charles Todhunter]

[9th February 1924]

" On that occasion quite a number of hon. Gentlemen, who recommended that the Bills should be thrown out, told us that we might meet the cost by a reduction in the village establishment. Thus Mr. R. Srinivasa Ayyangar mentioned with approval the reduction that had already taken place in his district and recommended that the same process might be adopted throughout the whole of the Presidency and anticipated a saving of at least 10 lakhs. Mr. Arumainatha Pillai quoted this with approval and said boldly that in his district of Chingleput several villages could be grouped and a number of appointments conveniently abolished. Mr. Devarajulu Nayudu went on to say that, if we carried out the process of regrouping, we might meet the whole of the increased cost as a result. Mr. Pakkiriswami Pillai told us that the karnams had got very little work and that the vettis and talayaris were engaged in doing the household duties of the karnams and headmen, such as drawing water for use in their homes, washing their clothes, and sometimes rocking the cradle and lulling their children to sleep. He proposed far more than we have ever been ready to suggest, namely, that we should double up the charges of village headmen and karnams. My hon. Colleague, the Revenue Member, has quoted other speeches, and I believe that I could trace more references of the same kind if only I were given the time.

" And now we come to the year of grace, 1923, when the whole question of making both ends of the budget meet has been exhaustively examined by the Retrenchment Committee, again a Committee of this House, assisted by a number of subordinate Committees of which one dealt especially with the question of the Land Revenue staff. The latter considered the possibility of dispensing with the village headmen altogether, and the main Committee recommended it in the case of zamindari estates. As regards the rest they recited the facts to which I have referred, and they were content to leave the matter in the hands of the Board of Revenue.

" While we had thus a large body of hon. Members advising us to make savings by regrouping the villages, what was the statesmanlike advice we had from the other parts of the House as to how to meet the enormous increase of nearly a crore of rupees in the expenditure which we were made to incur. I will take a single instance, the speech of the hon. Member Mr. Ramalinga Reddi on the 18th February 1922. He said: 'I must also enter a protest against the argument that, whenever this House passes a Resolution, it should be confronted with a Bill for special taxation. If the object of the Government is to prevent us from passing a Resolution, it could not adopt a better course. But I do not think constitutionally that there is anything in this argument; because though this House passed a Resolution in favour of increase of certain salaries, it did not pass any Resolution about the ways and means by which it was to be effected, and the Government must take the responsibility for finding the ways and means. We are not bound to agree to any and every measure they propose. If we throw out this measure, it does not mean that it will impair the force of our previous Resolution. It is only an invitation to Government to go and discover other ways of satisfying that very legitimate demand.'

" Now, Sir, I do venture to assure the House that we on this side of it are only too anxious to meet their wishes and to co-operate with them in every way we possibly can. And that being the case, I ask them, as I asked at the commencement, for a little more sympathy. Is it possible for us to co-operate in a line of action such as has been taken in the present case? Is

9th February 1924]

[Sir Charles Todhunter]

it fair, on the other hand, to create a position which is absolutely impossible, and then say 'it is our business to create such a position and it is your affair to find the way out?'

"Let me summarise what I have been saying in a few words. We told the House from the outset that it was impossible with the present resources of the Presidency to meet the enormous bill which was being presented to us. They insisted on presenting it nevertheless. And we found ways and means at the cost of a deficit. Before we were clear of that, they presented us with fresh and increased bill. We told them it could not be met without fresh taxation. A number of hon. Members then replied 'We won't give you your taxation, but you can reduce the numbers.' We reduced the numbers accordingly; and now the same hon. Members say 'You must restore the numbers, but you still cannot have fresh taxation. You must find the money some other way'."

Mr. A. RAMASWAMI MUDALIYAR:—"May I say that one link is missing there? The Government itself accepted that the increase of salary ought to be given and came forward with a Supplementary Grant."

The hon. Sir CHARLES TODHUNTER:—"The Government did that, as I have already stated, only when the House held a pistol at the Government's head."

Diwan Bahadur M. KRISHNAN NAYAR:—"Will the Government always agree to the pistol of the House?"

The hon. Sir CHARLES TODHUNTER:—"Sir, there is one compliment the House appears to be never tired of paying me, whatever they may think of my financial methods otherwise. They seem to credit me with an extraordinary faculty of conjuring crores out of catchwords. I beg to assure them that the compliment is undeserved, that it is not in my power to carry out the financial maxim to which expression has been given in this House, namely, 'What we want is more money out of the Treasury and less out of the pockets of the tax-payer.'"

Rao Bahadur O. TANIKACHALA CHETTIYAR:—"Sir, was there any indication in the Budget in respect of which there was a deficit that the number of village officers was going to be reduced?"

The hon. Sir CHARLES TODHUNTER:—"Obviously not, Sir, because the arrangements for reduction had not then been made."

Rao Bahadur O. TANIKACHALA CHETTIYAR:—"So the information was kept back and no information of reducing the number was given to the House, not even by an implication in the Budget."

The hon. Sir CHARLES TODHUNTER:—"Sir, the intention was the intention of the House expressed to us. What we could not do was to comply with its financial requirements without more money."

"Nor again am I able to share the views of my hon. Friend, Mr. Sarabha Reddi, who depicted to us an ideal state of Government in which everything from first to last should be managed by the village talaiyari assisted by a council of elders. Mr. President, I do beg the House to consider this as a practical proposition. We have come through a long series of years of deficits, and as a result of the enquiries of the Retrenchment Committee, we are just within sight of the promised land where revenue covers expenditure. I can assure the House that I like the reduction of village establishments no

[Sir Charles Todhunter]

[9th February 1924]

more than anybody else, but I do ask the House to agree that what we have been doing we were forced to do as a result of their own action, and that we cannot conjure money out of the thin air, so that, if they insist upon our retracing our steps, they must recognize that the result can only be either fresh taxation or the spending of everything that has been saved on restoring these village offices, which on their own recommendation have been abolished, to the exclusion of all progress in other directions."

Rai Bahadur Sir K. VENKATAREDDI NAYUDU :—" Mr. President, I did not want to intervene in this debate and it was only a little while ago that I asked my Friends to move for closure. But, Sir, certain remarks that fell from the hon. the Finance Member could not be left, in my opinion, without a word of challenge. The hon. Member, Sir, asked for sympathy, and I think he will admit that almost every Member of this House is perfectly willing to try his best to show his sympathies towards the Government in their arduous task. He has compared himself, no doubt, to one carrying a mill-stone round his neck, but may I point out that the stone was not the making of this Council, but of the Government themselves? (Hear, hear). It is a stone which they tied to their own necks just at the sight of the Reforms. The hon. Member is perfectly aware that the expenditure in recent years has enormously increased on account of the increase of salaries given to the various officers. May I remind the House of only one instance, viz., that of the district munsifs, whose pay has been increased from Rs. 200 to Rs. 300 at the start? May I again remind the House that Government have increased the pay of the first-grade Subordinate Judges to Rs. 1,200? The same has been the case with the Deputy Collectors. I know that in the Public Works Department some officers were promoted from Rs. 250 to Rs. 600 at one jump. What was more important and amusing was that, on a particular occasion, when I was going to a certain place, a Public Works Department officer came running to me and expressed his thankfulness to the Government not only for increasing his pay from Rs. 250 to Rs. 600, but also for having given him a lump sum of Rs. 3,000. It is thus that the big stone has been thrown around their necks. I do not think the Council is responsible for that. It is said that our revenue charges are more than those of any other Province. May I remind the hon. the Finance Member of the reply he himself had given to the Government of India so often? Is there any other Province in all India where the difficulty of collection of revenue is so great as here? Have they got such a difficult and complicated ryotwari system as we have got here? Then, what about the incidence of taxation? Has he not very rightly pointed out to the Government of India that it is only in this Province that taxation has reached its highest limit, whether it be the land tax, abkari tax or tax raised by the local bodies? In these circumstances, to say that we are in any way responsible, is not quite justifiable. Then, Sir, the hon. Member referred to the fact that for these appointments there has been a scramble. I do not know how much scramble there is, but I know that these appointments go merely by hereditary right."

The hon. Sir CHARLES TODHUNTER :—" May I say that the author of that statement was the hon. Mover? "

Rai Bahadur Sir K. VENKATAREDDI NAYUDU :—" I beg the hon. Member's pardon. Whatever that may be, after all the village officer's job is not such an easy job. I should like to bring to the notice of the House a

9th February 1924] [Sir K. Venkatarreddi Nayudu]

few facts. I know that what I am going to say is familiar to every one here, but still it brooks repetition. As has been suggested in some quarters, the village officer is the embodiment of the Government itself in the village. It is his duty, not only to attend to collection work, but also every officer of the Government has to be attended to by the village headman, if he comes to the village. If a revenue inspector comes, he must be in attendance; if a Tahsildar comes, he must be in attendance. If the Salt Sub-Inspector comes, he has to see that the trees are tapped. Whenever the various authorities come there, he has to attend to their supplies. Moreover, when he is on his way to do some other business, if a ryot pays him a tax of Rs. 4, and if he keeps the money in the box and goes out and if, in the meanwhile, his daughter secures it without the knowledge of the father, the village officer is liable for temporary misappropriation if his accounts were to be checked by the Tahsildar the next morning. Here is a specimen of the village officer's responsibility: Because a village officer did not report that a hay-stack caught fire somewhere, he was convicted and sentenced. It was not even paddy. It was mere hay. Yet he was sent to jail for that. He has to report occurrences of not only his own jurisdiction, but also what might have occurred in another man's jurisdiction. In these circumstances, to group two or three villages and ask the headman to do the duties of two or three people is, I submit, very hard for him and very bad even from the administrative point of view.

"The next question that was raised was that this grouping is mostly a creation of this Council. They wanted the village headmen's salaries to be increased and they must be prepared for the consequence. I admit that, to a certain extent, this Council is responsible for the state of affairs. But, as has been repeatedly pointed out in this Council, this Council has passed and given its consent to three measures of taxation, direct or indirect, viz, enhancement of the Court fee, the Stamp fee and Registration fee. At that time the Government were prepared to bring in another bill of taxation on amusements. I am sure if any such measure had been brought forward, this Council would have consented. As pointed out by Mr. Ramalinga Reddi, after all is said and done, Government owe it to themselves to be prepared to meet contingencies as they arise. Seeing that the opinion in this Council and outside is so very strong on this single question of regrouping, and seeing that the hardships that members of the public and the village officers will be put to will be so great, I strongly suggest that the Government should accept this Resolution."

Mr. T. ADINARAYANA CHETTIYAR:—"Mr. President, Sir, at the very outset, I must congratulate myself on being a new Member of this House. Because even the Finance Member cannot quote me against myself. What struck me most in the discussion of this resolution was the almost perfect unanimity of opinion on the question of the evils of regrouping from all parts of this House. It is due to the fact that it is a recognized principle that the village is the unit of administration in India and it is an equally admitted fact that the village officer is the irreducible minimum of administrative machinery in the village. In fact, I challenge any member of this House, even including the official benches, to mention a time in the history of this country when this was not so. Every revenue officer knows this fact. Even to-day when a Tahsildar or Revenue Divisional Officer comes to know that a village munsif is not residing within the village but in a neighbouring

[Mr. T. Adinarayana Chettiyar] [9th February 1924]

village though only a furlong off, he would make life a hell for him and would not cease tormenting the poor man until he has acquired a hut within the village by fair means or foul. This is a fact that does not admit of differences of opinion.

"Let us next see what the duties of the village officer are. I thought he had about 32 distinct duties to perform. But my hon. Friend Mr. R. Srinivasa Ayyangar the other day told us he had 40 or 50 separate duties to perform. However that be, it is an admitted fact that to his charge are consigned many important functions, collection of vital statistics, cultivation account, village sanitation and the reporting of serious crime—to mention only a few. My previous speaker, the hon. Sir K. Venkata Reddi Nayudu has just given us instances after instances of glaring cases of miscarriage of justice due to delay in the reporting of crime. People who have experience of criminal courts know that in thousands of cases such miscarriage of justice is a matter of daily occurrence. And as regards the safeguarding of Government property itself the recent regrouping has worked disastrously. I have, here with me, reports of several instances in my district of North Arcot where whole villages are left without a village munsif, a karnam, a talayari or even a vettiyan to take charge of Government property. That is as regards that aspect of the question which affects Government interests.

"As regards the men themselves, fully sixteen thousands, Sir, I am corrected by friends, fully seventeen thousands have been thrown out of employ. And even more than the fact of regrouping was the manner of doing it which is felt as a real hardship and a piece of glaring injustice. At one stroke, people whose families have faithfully and zealously served Government for generations, nay, for over a hundred years in some instances, have been mercilessly thrown out. It would look as if the object of the framers of the Bill to cut at the hereditary nature of village officers' posts, was anticipated and unfortunately successfully anticipated by the revenue officers who brought about this regrouping. The injustice was further aggravated by the appointment of new and inferior men in the place of tried and successful servants. Many a rumour was afloat at that time as regards the officers who effected the regrouping. But I do not wish to give expression to them in this House nor would it serve any useful purpose to do so.

"The fixing of the area for the jurisdiction of the village officers has been most arbitrarily done. Speaking for the district of North Arcot, I am informed that in some cases, as a result of this regrouping, the area extends to a radius of 7 or 8 miles. Is it any wonder that a village officer is not able to discharge his duties satisfactorily? What is even worse from the Government point of view is the fact that the work of collection of revenue seriously suffers. For reasons which we may not enquire into now, the charge for each village officer has been most inequitably fixed in the course of this regrouping. I have in my hand a list which shows how inequitable and unjust this has been. I shall not detain this House long but I shall content myself with only a few instances. Vagai and Abdullapuram form a unit with a beriz of Rs. 1,000 and Kadapanthangal and Perumathangal form another unit also with a beriz of Rs. 1,000, while Mamundur with a beriz of Rs. 12,000 and Ankavoor with a beriz of Rs. 11,000 and Seshamangalam with a beriz of Rs. 12,000 are also treated each as a single unit. Can unfairness and inequity go further?

9th February 1924] [Mr. T. Adinarayana Chettiyar]

"As regards appeals, even in cases of glaring injustice, my hon. Friend Mr. Thanikachellam Chettiyar has recounted his bitter experiences to this House and as he selected his illustrations from my own North Arcot district, he has relieved me of my burden a good deal. Even at a very moderate computation, I am told, the money spent by these unfortunate men would come to lakhs. I personally know of several vakils who have earned a competence by this class of business. I do not grudge it, because, after all, they belong to my profession. What I do grudge however is the fact that they did not get justice even after such a costly outlay. For, in this affair, the only justice obtained by these unfortunate appellants seems to have been, in the eloquent words of my hon. Friend, the literally stereotyped reply, 'The Board sees no reason to interfere.'

"Therefore I earnestly appeal to all members, including those on the Government benches, to undo the perpetration of this injustice. The hon. the Finance Member made an appeal—a piteous appeal—for sympathy to enable him to balance the Budget. While endorsing it, I venture to remind you of the earnest and piteous appeals of the seventeen thousand poor and honest men who have been sent adrift in this wide world. The hon. the Finance Member also made reference to the presenting of a revolver to obtain some concessions on a previous occasion. May I remind him, Sir, the same revolver is not extinct even now.

"If an attempt is made on his part to render justice to these men, we in this House can be trusted to do our best when the budget time comes, as it must come in a few weeks from now. But after all, Sir, is it not the duty of a Government to find the money as any suggestions from the non-officials has not much chance of being acceptable to the officials? But, feeling on the matter is so intense that even if it is admitted, for the sake of argument, that fresh taxation is necessary as a consequence of the cancellation of regrouping, even that, Sir, would not perhaps be so intolerable or unthinkable as the injustice perpetrated on these men who it may be said, without any exaggeration, form the real steel-frame of Indian Administration.

"With these words, Sir, I commend this Resolution for the acceptance of the House."

Mr. K. KOTI REDDI:—"Mr. President, Sir, coming from a family which can boast of relations and friends who have been village munsifs of many villages, I can assure the House and you, Sir, that I can claim to have a very intimate knowledge of the conditions of the village officers in at least three or four districts; and knowing this as I do, I feel that this is a measure which is most ill-advised and, may I also say, disastrous. If this state of things is allowed to continue, I am afraid the results will be very serious. For satisfying the claims of a few people, the Government has created discontent amongst a number of men, and, from what I can personally judge, the people that have been removed as a consequence of this grouping of villages are generally the most influential people in the particular villages. This is how things have happened, at least in the districts with which I am acquainted. It might have happened that the officers who had to decide the claims of these people have generally excluded such influential people. I cannot think of a state of things in a village in which all the influential people are excluded from these responsible posts with the consequent discontent that prevails. It is not so much

[Mr. K. Koti Reddi]

[9th February 1924]

the pay, as some hon. Members have pointed out, that is really attracting these people, not, in the words of my hon. Friend Mr. Kesava Pillai, that there is a good deal of scramble for these offices in the villages, but there is something more at least in the villages with which I am acquainted. It is not merely the reduction or the increase of pay that they care very much for. As a matter of fact the responsibility of the work which they have to do and the amount of work that they have to turn out cannot be adequately paid for by Rs. 10, Rs. 20 or even Rs. 50. But the idea that underlies this desire on the part of these men to hold these posts is that they would be considered as head of the village, that the post carries with it some dignity and that the office is coming to them for generations together. That is the sentiment that prevails in these families. I, no doubt, realize the difficulties that might be in the way of the Government. I am sorry to say that to a certain extent this Council also in a way suggested the idea of grouping of these villages. But I am sure if the Government had put the question definitely in the minds of the Council whether they were for the old state of things or for grouping the villages and increasing the salaries of the village officers, I have no doubt that they would have preferred the old state of things. So far as the Ceded Districts are concerned, if the Government cannot find a way of meeting the demands of the village officers and reinstating them, there will be a lot of discontent amongst them. I think that the Government should find a way either in the shape of additional taxation, if necessary—for which I do not think this Council will give its sanction—or by reduction in their salaries if that is agreed to or by some other means. I think that if the villagers are given the option of choosing either the reduction in their pay or their being reinstated, I think they would be really prepared for the reduction in pay. Of course, I only suggest this course as an alternative provided the Government finds it impossible to give effect to this Resolution in any other way.

“ As other hon. Members have already pointed out, there are really a good many difficulties in the proper administration of the villages if this grouping of villages is continued. I know that even previously some of the villages were extensive enough for one village headman. Now, if two or more villages are clubbed together, it will be impossible for one man to carry out the duties. Some of the hon. Members have already referred to the various duties that these village headmen have to do. One thing that strikes me most is that these village headmen are asked to take care of the property of the Government in the villages. If some one takes into his head to fell a tree for his household purposes, the village headman is taken to task. He has got very many responsibilities to discharge and, even under the old state of things, it was difficult sometimes for the village officer to perform all his duties satisfactorily, and I am really surprised at the statement of the hon. Member for Finance and others that the village officers have very little work to do. I am afraid that on account of the grouping of the villages and the consequent increase in the duties of the village officers, the statistics that are prepared by them are not done with that amount of personal inspection that is necessary. It is true that the village headmen do not devote the whole day for the office work; but at the same time he has got very responsible and important duties to perform. It is not necessary that he should devote all the 24 hours for the official work. If he does so, even a

9th February 1924]

[Mr. K. Koti Reddi]

pay of Rs. 100 will not be enough. That doesn't mean that he has no work.

"As regards the menials, the argument put forward against their continuance is that most of them do not do their official work properly and that they do a lot of private work to the village headmen and that the village headmen themselves can also look after the work which the menials are doing. I know, and I admit, that many of the village officers do utilize the menials for doing their private work. But is it not our experience, Sir, that from top to bottom every officer in this country to a certain extent uses the service of his peons and other subordinates for his private purposes? I know many officers who use their peons as cooks, as motor drivers, etc. When such is the case, I do not know why the village headmen cannot take the services of the village menials. I know in many cases these services are offered voluntarily to the village headmen, because they get some service in return. Some of the menials get their meals in the houses of the village headmen. Sometimes when the village menials cannot do the work, the village headman asks his private servants to do the work. After all, there is nothing wrong in using the Government servants for the private work of the village headmen. Again, I can say this. I have travelled through at least one district and I know the conditions of at least three or four districts generally. There is a lot of discontent among these village officers. It is impossible to describe it. Many of them have to spend five or six thousand rupees by way of bribing the lower officials for getting the appointment or by way of paying the vakils. They will always be hanging about under the trees of the Revenue Board office. I know a man who has already spent Rs. 500 and who is prepared to give me even Rs. 5,000 if I can help him in getting appointment. It is not the salary that they care more for as it is the prestige and the dignity attached to the job and the idea that the office is coming to him from generation to generation. It is a hereditary right in most of the families and it is to this that people attach great importance.

3.30 p.m. "As a result of this, there is too much of scramble for the appointment. As a result of this regrouping those who have been friends have become enemies with the result that two persons died. There is a good deal of difficulty in having large areas of two or three villages administered by one man, and unless the Government is prepared to assuage this discontent, I think that it will result in a very unhappy state of affairs."

Mr. K. SARABHA REDDI :—"Sir, the only officials in the service of Government whom both the Government and the people claim to be their own men are the village officials. They are as much of the Government as they are of the people. They form the link between the Government and the people. The link should be as strong as possible, and under no circumstances should it be subjected to weakening influences of any kind. Any attempt to weaken this link goes to create and widen the gulf between the Government and the people, and this would mean the alienation of mutual sympathy and co-operation which are the two most essential and indispensable requisites for security, efficiency and continuance of administration and for the peace and prosperity of the people.

"The village officers have occupied and have been occupying this most responsible position from generation to generation, and I will not

[Mr. K. Sarabha Reddi]

[9th February 1924]

be far from right if I say, since long long before the advent of the British Government. As far as my knowledge goes, never before in the history of this Presidency has any attempt so inconsiderate and so imprudent been made to shatter and endanger the unit of administration by clubbing villages. Several families who have been holding their hereditary appointments in times of weal and woe without aspiring for any compensatory remuneration compatible with their position, responsibilities and duties, have, all on a sudden, for no sin of their own, except perhaps that they, sharing the feelings of the times, aspired for enhancement of salaries, been ruthlessly deprived of their appointments. They have been struck with daggers from behind.

"It was but the other day that the country was rejoicing over the news of enhancement of their salaries, but now they are being gnawed by anxiety owing to their friends' and relatives' deprivation of appointments and time-honoured rights and privileges.

"The pretended sympathy of the Government is to their minds only a deceitful manoeuvre on the part of the Government. They were not told that any enlargement of their salaries would eventually bring about results endangering their places, prestige, and time-honoured rights. Had they been apprised of this, they would have perhaps withdrawn their appeals for enhancement of salaries. From the beginning, they have always been made victims to some kind of deceit or another on the part of the Government. When the British took over the reins of Government, they certainly needed the help and the services of the headmen of villages. Surely they would have found the villagers too hot for them had the village headmen not condescended to render them help. Then naturally they ought to have held out hopes to them that they would never interfere with their rights and prestige, and that they would, for all times to come, be allowed to continue to be hereditary headmen of villages and so on. Allured by such promises and pledges, they agreed to serve on nominal salaries and have till now been, true to their words, sticking to their appointments like leeches even at great sacrifices in spite of the apparently systematic embarking of Government on a policy of gradually dwindling their importance and prestige. While they are seeing with their own eyes that sons of their servants and dependants, bred up, brought up and educated by them, are securing places of position and emoluments and power, they are, though possessed of full means, still preferring to be content with their position as headmen of villages. What is this due to? It is due to their firmly established belief that their appointment is hereditary and that nothing in the world can shake them. They have always been faithful and loyal to the core. They merit no ill-treatment. The clubbing of villages has enormously changed their feelings. It has produced results most disastrous. It has plunged several families into indescribable misery, and to extricate themselves from it they are sacrificing all their money and energy. You may not believe me, Sir, but it is a fact that some lakhs of rupees are being poured into the pockets of lawyers and others who fatten themselves by feeding on the innocence of others.

"So much with regard to the harm it has done to the families of village officials.

"Now, coming to the result it has produced on the country, I venture to say that the country is gradually losing its touch with the Government.

9th February 1924]

[Mr. K. Sarabha Reddi]

In a village, the order of Government is always associated with the village administration, in which alone they smell the existence of Government. Now, several villages have not their headmen living in their midst. To them, for all practical purposes, the Government is extinct. Quarrels have been more and more rampant. Village peace is destroyed. Village prosperity is getting more and more deteriorated. Crimes have increased. The statistics collected from the registers maintained by the Police and Magistrates are no right criteria to judge the truth of the above statement.

"Now, coming to the Government itself, I may venture to say that the integrity of the Government is endangered. The security of the Government is endangered. The enemies of Government are more free. Sir, any arrows shot at the Government should pass through village officials. If the village officials are not discontented, the arrows become blunt and ineffective and stop away as soon as they approach them. If they are discontented, the arrows find no obstruction to pass through them to the Government. If they are wounded, the arrows get themselves sharpened while passing through them, and they multiply in numbers.

"Sir, I do not exaggerate matters if I venture to say this, if the clubbing had been done prior to the non-co-operation movement, it would have produced results quite different from what it has actually produced. Any number of hostile movements instituted by men of whatever power and influence will simply go to nothing if the loyalty of village officers is kept unaffected. I do not want to elaborate very much on this subject.

"In one word, Sir, I say the security of the Government depends upon the security of their village officials, that the dignity of the Government depends upon the dignity of their village officials, that the efficiency of Government depends upon the efficiency of village officials, and that the peace of the Government depends upon the peace of the village officials. I appeal to Government not to hesitate to keep the village administration intact at any cost and not to care for having to incur any extra expenditure in order to improve the efficiency of administration; for, it is only then that the necessity of having to spend lakhs and lakhs to put an end to hostile movements started by the enemies of Government, and to put down the Fituri operations started by men like Seetarama Razu, will be avoided.

"So, in the interests of the people of the Presidency and in the interests of the people of the districts who have sent in their appeals to the Government that the clubbing of villages be stopped and that the original units be restored, I appeal to all my colleagues in the Council this side, that side, and on every side of the House, to support this Resolution unanimously and wholeheartedly."

(At this stage, Mr. E. W. Legh got up to speak.)

The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"I wish to know whether the hon. Member is replying on behalf of the Government. If so, he may do so later on."

Mr. E. W. LEGH:—"I am speaking as a Member of this House, Sir. Before hon. Members finally make up their minds to vote on this Resolution, I wish to urge upon them a clear consideration of this question. It is quite clear that many Members feel very strongly on the subject of the present position of village officers as a result of this regrouping of villages. Sir, it is not always when a man feels strongly that he decides most wisely,

[Mr. E. W. Legh]

[9th February 1924]

and I do think that, before a decision is arrived at upon this question, hon. Members of this House should consider it very carefully. We have all seen that this proposal for regrouping and reduction of the number of village officers was not one which solely emanated from the officials. It was a definite suggestion brought forward by certain Members of this House and which so far remains on record. There has been no sign anywhere that any Member of this House raised a voice of dissent, or questioned whether the proposal was good or not. Therefore, we assumed, when the idea was put before the House at another time, that there would not be such a strong feeling against the proposal and that it would be dissented from only to a slight degree. But now, Sir, we find that the House has changed. What I am asking is this: are the Government to understand, from the discussion that has taken place just now, that the House has made up its mind finally as to what their considered opinion is? I think this is a matter of some importance and it would be well if the Government were to know what the considered opinion of the House was on the subject. Some time was spent in discussing this motion and a large number of amendments to it. It seems to me there was some difference of opinion in the minds of hon. Members of this House as to how far the Resolution could go.

" Another point on which I can rely is that we have not got the final opinion, and surely it would be disastrous if we were to continuously change our opinion on a matter like this.

" I want to refer to one or two things more. The first point that I would like to refer to is the collection of revenue. It is said that, owing to this regrouping, the present village officers will have to take additional trouble for the collection of revenue. No one, I suppose, would pretend that we should have the revenue collected by such a large staff as the present one. If it is agreed that such a large staff will not be necessary for the collection of revenue, and at the same time if the Finance Committee were approached with a proposal to reinstate all the village officers by incurring additional expenditure, they will turn down the proposal. Therefore, this question will have to be considered very carefully.

" The second point is this: it has been said that the basis of administration is the village unit. It is perfectly true. But I am afraid we have been using the word 'village' in a different sense. There are villages in many places in the south of any of which it may be said that the village is not one single group, but a single street. It is quite possible to regroup the villages without in any way disturbing the village administration.

" Sir, village regrouping is carried on in a peculiar manner. A number of hamlets are joined together into one village. It may be that
3-45 p m. in the regrouping some hamlets are taken away from one village and added to another. What I want to say is that we must not assume that there is administrative inconvenience because regrouping has been done. It depends upon how the regrouping is done. Now, Sir, it has been alleged by certain gentlemen that regrouping has been done badly. I am afraid I cannot contradict that, though not even one specific case of bad regrouping has been pointed out. If there are any such regroupings we shall be ready to reconsider them. As has been already stated,

9th February 1924]

[Mr. E. W. Legh]

there is no one who is more tenacious of his position and so ready to take any possible course as the village officer. He will sooner or later come with his appeal and the Government, I think, ought to consider"

Diwan Bahadur P. KESAVA PILLAI :—" There is no appeal to Government."

Mr. E. W. LEGH :—" Somehow or other these officers find their way by means of petitions, memorials, etc. Of course, in many cases no appeal is heard ; where the appeal is simply with reference to the choice of one of two persons, we leave it to the better judgment of the man on the spot. But there are very many cases in which these officers get access ; somehow or other the papers are looked into and action taken."

Mr. C. V. VENKATARAMANA AYYANGAR :—" Were there not a number of objections to regrouping from the villagers themselves ? "

Mr. E. W. LEGH :—" If there were, I can only say I have not seen them myself. Members of the Finance Committee will probably see from the number of papers that have gone through their hands that as a consequence of the abolition and amalgamation of villages it has been possible to effect a reduction amongst other things in the actual cadre of the deputy collectors."

Mr. C. V. VENKATARAMANA AYYANGAR :—" Any reduction in the cadre of the District Collectors ? "

Mr. E. W. LEGH :—" No reduction in the cadre of the District Collectors. Only a number of deputy collectors, say from 12 to 25, were reduced.

" One other point I wish to bring out is this. If we can get the work done more cheaply than it has been done, are we justified in continuing a higher scale of expenditure ? Of course, if the cheaper collection meant inefficiency and inconvenience, we are justified in having a larger staff. One gentleman said that a hundred groups had been abolished and still the work is going on. It has been found that in a district 800 officers had been abolished and work is going on just as before. Now, if I were to come before the Finance Committee and say that a large number of deputy collectors are waiting for confirmation because the number of posts has been reduced, I shall probably be told that they must wait. It seems to me that we must look at the matter from that point of view. If now a proposal were put forward to the Finance Committee that we must keep all the officers and that it is very hard to make them lose their posts, the Committee would probably say, ' Oh, we cannot ask the House to vote money '. So, Sir, I think I must again ask the House to consider very carefully before it comes to any final decision.

" Again, there are some legal difficulties in going back from the position which we have reached. They have to be faced also. So, Sir, the House must be quite sure before they pass this Resolution."

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI :—" Sir, the speeches that have been delivered from the Government benches against this Resolution went on this basis, namely, that this Resolution seeks to commit the House to an increased expenditure of Government revenue. On the other hand, Sir, the object of the Resolution is to prevent Government from going on with, what this Resolution says and what I believe the majority of the House also agree, this unjust saving at the expense of a very useful class of public servants, and at the expense of the efficiency and usefulness of villages in the life of this Presidency.

[Mr. S. Satyamurti]

[9th February 1924]

All this argument against committing the House to any extra expenditure is wholly irrelevant. When this House committed itself to the decision of increasing the pay of the village officers and when the Government accepted it, we did not give any express or implied undertaking that the Government might have a free hand to cut down expenditure by reducing the number of these officials. Much use has been made of that very hard-used word, *retrenchment*. And I should like to make one commentary upon that word. It does not mean cutting down expenditure on a most useful staff which cannot bear retrenchment. It is easy to talk of retrenchment, but here I may point out that there is a possibility of retrenching the villages practically out of existence. The hon. the Revenue Member claimed that they were able to save 29 lakhs. The process has already brought them a saving of 19 lakhs and they hope to get 10 lakhs more. With a full sense of my responsibility I would vote, and I hope the House also would with a full sense of its responsibility vote for the motion and would not want these 29 lakhs of rupees at the expense of the village officials. At any rate, it is our business to do so.

“When this House committed itself to the Resolution for the enhancement of the salaries of the village officers, they did so with open eyes thinking that Government ought not to have the benefit of this unjust saving and that Government must give effect to the Resolution without any reduction in the number of officers.

“A great deal was made of the point that taxation Bills which were introduced for the purpose of meeting the extra expenditure were rejected by the House. I venture to point out the logical fallacy underlying that argument. What guarantee is there, Mr. President, that when this House agrees to the imposition of 30 lakhs of taxation, this sum would be earmarked for the purposes for which the House voted it? There is no provision in the statute,—I speak subject to correction,—there is no provision in the Government of India Act, in the Rules and the Standing Orders under which this House can control the expenditure in that way. It is perfectly open to this autocratic Government to have the taxation Bills passed, spend the money any way they please and then snap their fingers at us; and we shall not be able to do anything. Under the circumstances, it is idle to say that the House refused to pass taxation Bills.”

Mr. G. F. PADDISON :—“Sir, I should like to know whether the Village Cess Act does not say that the revenue from that source must be devoted to the village officers.”

The hon. Mr. C. P. RAMASWAMI AYYAR :—“That was the object with which this Bill was introduced.”

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI :—“I was referring to the speech of the hon. the Revenue Member who said that certain taxation Bills must be introduced. If the Government on their part and if we on this side (Opposition) or on the other side (Supporters of the Government) agree to pass an Act to earmark the proceeds of the village cess for the purpose of paying these village officers, then it would be possible to give effect to this Resolution. The Village Cess Act does not say that, and a new law must be made for the purpose.”

9th February 1924]

Mr. E. W. LEGH:—"The Village Cess Act says that the levy of the cess is for the remuneration of the village officers and for other purposes in the discharge of their duties. I read these words in the Proceedings of the Council of the 18th February 1923."

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI:—"I was not referring to that. I was referring to a Bill which might have been introduced for that purpose. It is altogether another matter to suggest, as the hon. the Revenue Member did, that we must vote all taxation measures if we bring any measures that involve extra expenditure. That is misapprehending the fundamental basis on which this House and the Government should work together. We have no control over the expenditure. Unless such a Bill were introduced and rejected, there is no point in saying that this House rejected taxation measures of another kind and ought not to compel Government to find the money for it."

The hon. the RAJA OF KOLLENGODE:—"The measures were in regard to village cess."

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI:—"If the reference was to this particular measure and not to other taxation measures, I stand corrected. But on the general rejection or acceptance of taxation measures altogether, the House will consider them on their own merits and not as part of this or that Resolution."

"A clever use was made by the hon. the Revenue Member and the hon. the Finance Member of the speeches of some of the Members on this or that side of the House on a previous occasion. But I am sure I can remind the hon. Members that after all they stand no better than *obiter dicta* of eminent Judges of the High Court. They are not binding on themselves; they are not binding upon others and they do not bind the House, unless they are embodied in Resolutions passed in this House. There is no point in taxing this new House with the sentiments of some of the Members of the old House. The whole question is not whether some Members of the old House did or did not approve of the regrouping of the villages, but whether the House as a whole did or did not approve of the course. The Revenue Member woke up one fine morning and said 'We will regroup all the villages.' What authority did he have? Stray sentences in the speeches of certain individual Members have been read to us as authority; on the other hand, they have not the authority of the whole House."

"The hon. the Revenue Member said that he would prefer the less unpopular of the two measures after having gone into the matter. I may take it that he spoke on behalf of the Government. I take it that the Government realize that this regrouping of villages is very unpopular. There is no question about that. If I am not presumptuous, I may tell the hon. Member not to choose unpopular things at all but only to choose popular things."

"Then, again, some use was made of the argument that some Members are supporting the Resolution because pressure is brought to bear upon them from an influential section of the people. I am not; but if I were, I should not be ashamed of it. We are here to act on the pressure of the people and not on that of the Government. We are here to represent the people and their feelings. We would not be discharging our duties properly to this House and to the people whom we represent unless we act under their

[Mr. S. Satyamurti]

[9th February 1924]

pressure in all matters which are not intended to serve unworthy ends and which are purely for the benefit of the public.

"The Revenue Member also used the argument that the officers have prestige and pay need not be correspondingly increased. He knows, none better, that there is no man in this country who, for the sake of prestige, would willingly forego a part of his salary. Is it right that we should ask these village officials to make up for the loss of their pay by this magic word *prestige*? That is not a very useful argument.

"The only part of the hon. Member's argument which this House should take note of is this. He said that Government have carried the policy of regrouping and amalgamation to some extent, and they would finish it unless their hands are forced by an adverse vote of the House. The answer of the House should be in unmistakable terms: 'You did this against our wishes' and therefore, to the extent to which the Government of India Act, bad as it is, gives us power, we will say 'Thus far shalt thou go and no further; retrace the steps that have been taken already for the past so many months'.

4 p.m. "The Finance Member made a piteous appeal saying that he was trying to pull a big stone up the hill, and if we were to support this Resolution they would be adding to the weight of the stone. But that is not the spirit of those who on this side or on that side of the House support the Resolution. The stone of Sisyphus was such that when he took it up it rolled down. So long as this Government remains autocratic and irresponsible the burden will be there, and it will be impossible to lift it. The moment the Government becomes responsible to the people, the people and the Government will pull the stone up, and once the stone is pulled up it will remain there four-square to all the winds that blow. Analogies from Greek mythology are no arguments which concern the pay of the village officers and the regrouping of villages.

"In the course of the discussion we were challenged to find the means to meet the expenditure. I have answered this argument once. I realize quite as much as the hon. the Finance Member the false position in which the Government is placed. Here they are faced with a House containing a large elected majority. If we, for the present, forget all our communal jealousies and agree on the fundamental matter, we shall pass this Resolution, and the Government will have to take the responsibility of either rejecting it and thereby courting popular disapproval or carrying it out without the assistance of those very persons who passed the Resolution in finding out the ways and means for the expenditure. The remedy is this. The Government are impressed—I speak subject to correction—that the present system of Government, in which a large elected majority faces them with Resolutions for which they advisedly take no responsibility of carrying out, cannot last long. Let them therefore join with us and show that this diarchy is unworkable and that it is not possible to have a House working like this. Under Swaraj when we put forward resolutions like this, we will also share the responsibility of carrying them out and finding money for them. We will pass only such resolutions for the carrying out of which we will also be responsible along with the Government. So long as we are placed in this position, so long as we have no power over the disposal of the moneys we give to them, we can only say, 'This is a good thing and it ought to be done; by all means find the money for it if you can; we will use such means at our disposal to compel you to find the money.'

9th February 1924]

[Mr. S. Satyamurti]

"The hon. the Finance Member gave us a bit of the history of the Resolution for the increase of the village officers' pay some months or years ago in this House. He said that the Government had to agree to the increase of the pay of these officers because the House held a loaded pistol at their head and said that unless they agreed to it they would not vote the Stamp Act. Sir, I am very agreeably surprised to hear that valuable tribute to our party's programme from the hon. the Leader of the House. If only the elected Members of this House make up their minds to hold a loaded pistol at the head of the . . ."

The hon. Mr. C. P. RAMASWAMI AYYAR :—"The word 'loaded' was omitted."

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI :—"Well, Sir, the hon. the Finance Member is too much of a sportsman to be afraid of an unloaded pistol."

The hon. Mr. C. P. RAMASWAMI AYYAR :—"I was referring to the party of my hon. Friend."

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI :—"Whether my party has a loaded pistol or an unloaded pistol will be known in three months' time. To-day, in another place, they have decided not to oppose the Resolution for a Round Table Conference to give India Swaraj. Whether the pistol is loaded or unloaded, he will know and his friends will know very soon. In the meantime, let me say to this House that if the elected Members of this House learn to sink all their communal differences and stand together as one man on this question, and on all other questions, the Government will yield with good grace or ill-grace to our demands. Therefore, I ask the House to pass the Resolution and tell the Government, 'If you do not carry it out, beware the Ides of March are not far off'."

Diwan Bahadur P. KESAVA PILLAI :—"Sir, I do not want to take up the time of the House by repeating the arguments already advanced by hon. Members. The points raised by the hon. the Leader of the House have been answered by so many hon. Members very eloquently. Therefore, the only thing I want to say, and which I forgot to tell the House when I moved the Resolution, is that the Board of Revenue has a Standing Order that the claims of minors to hereditary offices should not be recognized. When a big and more important village having hereditary village officers and a smaller and less important village are grouped, and the claimant to office happens to be a minor, his claims are overlooked in favour of the office-holder in the smaller village or an adult claimant in that village, though he might have no influence. The Divisional Officers tell us that it is not within their power to do anything, because a certain Order of the Government prohibits them from taking into consideration the claims of minors. I hope the hon. Member will take note of it and modify the Order, if he is going to insist upon continuing this disastrous policy of grouping."

The hon. the RAJA OF KOLLENGODE :—"I would take note of this point."

Diwan Bahadur P. KESAVA PILLAI :—"I thank the hon. Member for the kind promise."

"There are so many other points which I wish to dwell upon, but I do not want to take up the time of the Council with any further elaborate arguments. I should like very much that the motion is voted upon at once."

[9th February 1924]

Mr. K. PRABHAKARAN TAMPAN :—" I wish to speak against the motion."

Diwan Bahadur P. KESAVA PILLAI :—" It is too late."

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—" I permit the hon. Member to speak."

Mr. K. PRABHAKARAN TAMPAN :—" I regret that I have to strike a discordant note in the debate which so far as non-officials are concerned"

Diwan Bahadur P. KESAVA PILLAI :—" May I rise to a point of order, Sir? You have already asked the Government Member to speak and he said that he had no reply to make. Now, will it be in order for any private Member to resume the debate?"

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—" This is no point of order at all. The convention is that when the Government Member has replied, the debate should ordinarily be closed; but if he does not choose to reply the termination of the debate is left to the discretion of the hon. the President."

Mr. K. PRABHAKARAN TAMPAN :—" Sir, I do not wish to press my claim for speech. I shall respect the wishes of my venerable Friend and sit down."

The Resolution, as amended, was then put and carried

On the motion of Mr. C. V. Venkataramana Ayyangar, a poll was taken and the House divided thus:—

4-15 p.m.

Ayes.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Mr. Ari Gowder. | 26. Rao Bahadur P. A. Ramalinga Chettiyar. |
| 2. " S. Arpudaswami Udayar. | 27. Mr. P. Siva Rao. |
| 3. " P. K. S. A. Arumnga Nadar. | 28. " A. Chidambara Nadar. |
| 4. " A. V. Bhanoji Rao. | 29. " K. Koti Reddi. |
| 5. " N. Devendrudu. | 30. " P. Anjaneyulu. |
| 6. Diwan Bahadur Sir P. Tyagaraya Chetti- | 31. " S. Muttayya Mudaliyar. |
| yar. | 32. " C. Gopala Meenon. |
| 7. Rao Sahib S. Ellappa Chettiyar. | 33. Rai Bahadur T. M. Narasimhacharlu. |
| 8. Rao Bahadur P. C. Ethirajulu Nayudu. | 34. Mr. V. C. Vellingiri Gounder. |
| 9. " Cruz Fernandez. | 35. " A. Ranganatha Mudaliyar. |
| 10. Mr. L. C. Guruswami. | 36. " J. A. Saldanha. |
| 11. " B. Mahabala Hegde. | 37. " M. R. Seturatnam Ayyar. |
| 12. " P. N. Marthandam Pillai. | 38. " R. Srinivasa Ayyangar. |
| 13. " B. Muniswami Nayudu. | 39. " Sami Venkatachalam Chetti. |
| 14. " C. Muttayya Mudaliyar. | 40. " C. V. Venkataramana Ayyangar. |
| 15. " B. Obelesappa. | 41. Sir K. Venkatarreddi Nayudu. |
| 16. " C. Ponnuswami Nayudu. | 42. Mr. K. Venkatachala Padayachi. |
| 17. " K. Raghuchandra Bellala. | 43. Rao Bahadur C. Venkataranga Reddi. |
| 18. " P. T. Rajan. | 44. Mr. M. Ratnaswami. |
| 19. " B. Ramachandra Reddi. | 45. Diwan Bahadur M. Krishnan Nayar. |
| 20. " A. Ramaswami Mudaliyar. | 46. Mr. W. Vijayaraghava Mudaliyar. |
| 21. " J. D. Samuel. | 47. " R. Veerian. |
| 22. " K. Sarabha Reddi. | 48. " S. Satyamurti. |
| 23. " K. Sitarama Reddi. | 49. " T. Adinarayana Chettiyar. |
| 24. Diwan Bahadur P. Kesava Pillai. | 50. Rao Sahib U. Rama Rao. |
| 25. Rao Bahadur C. Natesa Mudaliyar. | 51. Mr. G. Rameswara Rao. |

Noes.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. The hon. Sir Charles Todhunter. | 9. Dr. John Mathai. |
| 2. " Sir Arthur Knapp. | 10. Mr. P. L. Moore. |
| 3. " Mr. C. P. Ramaswami Ayyar. | 11. " G. F. Paddison. |
| 4. " the Raja of Kollengode. | 12. " V. Madhava Raja. |
| 5. " Rao Bahadur Sir A. P. Patro. | 13. Hony. Lieut. Madurai. |
| 6. " Diwan Bahadur T. N. Sivag- | 14. Mr. O. M. Narayana Nambudiripad. |
| nanam Pillai. | 15. " K. Prabhakaran Tampam. |
| 7. Mr. R. W. Davies. | 16. " R. Srinivasan. |
| 8. " E. W. Legh. | |

Ayes : 51

Noes : 16

The motion as amended was carried.